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PREFACES,
BIOGRAPHICAL
AND
CRITICAL,
TO THE
WORKS
OF THE
ENGLISH POETS.
BY SAMUEL JOHNSON.

VOLUME THE NINTH.

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M DCC LXXXI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

FACTITIOUS TOPICS

OF THE

WORKS

OF THE

CRITICAL

AND

BIOGRAPHICAL

PREFACES

PREFACES

TO

SAVAGE, SOMERVILE, THOMSON, HAMMOND,

AND

COLLINS.


BRITISH MUSEUM

SAVAGE.

IT has been obſerved in all ages, that the advantages of nature or of fortune have contributed very little to the promotion of happineſs; and that thoſe whom the ſplendor of their rank, or the extent of their capacity, have placed upon the ſummits of human life, have not often given any juſt occaſion to envy in thoſe who look up to them from a lower ſtation. Whether it be that apparent ſuperiority incites great deſigns, and great deſigns are naturally liable to fatal miſcarriages; or that the general lot of mankind is miſery, and the misfortunes of thoſe whoſe eminence drew upon them an univerſal attention, have been more carefully recorded, becauſe they were more generally obſerved, and have in reality been only more conſpicuous than thoſe of others, not more frequent, or more ſevere.

That affluence and power, advantages extrinſic and adventitious, and therefore eaſily ſepa-

rable from thoſe by whom they are poſſeſſed, ſhould very often flatter the mind with expectations of felicity which they cannot give, raiſes no aſtoniſhment; but it ſeems rational to hope, that intellectual greatneſs ſhould produce better effects; that minds qualified for great attainments ſhould firſt endeavour their own benefit; and that they who are moſt able to teach others the way to happineſs, ſhould with moſt certainty follow it themſelves.

But this expectation, however plauſible, has been very frequently diſappointed. The heroes of literary as well as civil hiſtory have been very often no leſs remarkable for what they have atchieved; and volumes have been written only to enumerate the miſeries of the learned, and relate their unhappy lives, and untimely deaths.

To theſe mournful narratives, I am about to add the Life of Richard Savage, a man whoſe writings intitle him to an eminent rank in the claſſes of learning, and whoſe misfortunes claim a degree of compaſſion, not always due to the unhappy, as they were often the conſequences of the crimes of others, rather than his own.

In the year 1697, Anne Counteſs of Macclesfield, having lived for ſome time upon very uneaſy terms with her huſband, thought a public confeſſion of adultery the moſt obvious and expeditious method of obtaining her liberty; and therefore declared, that the child, with which ſhe

ſhe was then great, was begotten by the Earl Rivers. This, as may be eaſily imagined, made her huſband no leſs deſirous of a ſeparation than herſelf, and he proſecuted his deſign in the moſt effectual manner; for he applied not to the eccleſiaſtical courts for a divorce, but to the parliament for an act, by which his marriage might be diſſolved, the nuptial contract totally annulled, and the children of his wife illegitimated. This act, after the uſual deliberation, he obtained, though without the approbation of ſome, who conſidered marriage as an affair only cognizable by eccleſiaſtical judges *; and on March 3d was ſeparated from his wife, whoſe fortune, which was very great, was repaid her; and who having, as well as her huſband, the liberty of making another choice, was in a ſhort time married to Colonel Bret.

* This year was made remarkable by the diſſolution of a marriage ſolemnized in the face of the church. SALMON's REVIEW.

The following proteſt is regiſtered in the books of the Houſe of Lords.

Diſſentient.

Becauſe we conceive that this is the firſt bill of that nature that hath paſſed, where there was not a divorce firſt obtained in the Spiritual Court; which we look upon as an ill precedent, and may be of dangerous conſequence in the future.

HALIFAX. ROCHESTER.

While the Earl of Macclesfield was profecuting this affair, his wife was, on the 10th of January 1697-8, delivered of a ſon, and the Earl Rivers, by appearing to conſider him as his own, left none any reaſon to doubt of the ſincerity of her declaration; for he was his godfather, and gave him his own name, which was by his direction inſerted in the regiſter of St. Andrew's pariſh in Holborn, but unfortunately left him to the care of his mother, whom, as ſhe was now ſet free from her huſband, he probably imagined likely to treat with great tenderneſs the child that had contributed to ſo pleaſing an event. It is not indeed eaſy to diſcover what motives could be found to overbalance that natural affection of a parent, or what intereſt could be promoted by neglect or cruelty. The dread of ſhame or of poverty, by which ſome wretches have been incited to abandon or to murder their children, cannot be ſuppoſed to have affected a woman who had proclaimed her crimes and ſolicited reproach, and on whom the clemency of the legiſlature had undeſervedly beſtowed a fortune, which would have been very little diminiſhed by the expences which the care of her child could have brought upon her. It was therefore not likely that ſhe would be wicked without temptation, that ſhe would look upon her ſon from his birth with a kind of reſentment and abhorrence; and, inſtead

inſtead of ſupporting, aſſiſting, and defending him, delight to ſee him ſtruggling with miſery, or that ſhe would take every opportunity of aggravating his misfortunes, and obſtructing his reſources, and with an implacable and reſtleſs cruelty continue her perſecution from the firſt hour of his life to the laſt,

But whatever were her motives, no ſooner was her ſon born, than ſhe diſcovered a reſolution of diſowning him; and in a very ſhort time removed him from her ſight, by committing him to the care of a poor woman, whom ſhe directed to educate him as her own, and injoined never to inform him of his true parents.

Such was the beginning of the life of Richard Savage. Born with a legal claim to honour and to affluence, he was in two months illegitimated by the parliament, and diſowned by his mother, doomed to poverty and obſcurity, and launched upon the ocean of life, only that he might be ſwallowed by its quickſands, or daſhed upon its rocks.

His mother could not indeed infect others with the ſame cruelty. As it was impoſſible to avoid the inquiries which the curioſity or tenderneſs of her relations made after her child, ſhe was obliged to give ſome account of the meaſures that ſhe had taken; and her mother, the Lady Maſon, whether in approbation of her

deſign, or to prevent more criminal contrivances, engaged to tranſact with the nurſe, to pay her for her care, and to ſuperintend the education of the child.

In this charitable office ſhe was aſſiſted by his godmother Mrs. Lloyd, who, while ſhe lived, always looked upon him with that tenderneſs, which the barbarity of his mother made peculiarly neceſſary; but her death, which happened in his tenth year, was another of the misfortunes of his childhood; for though ſhe kindly endeavoured to alleviate his loſs by a legacy of three hundred pounds, yet, as he had none to proſecute his claim, to ſhelter him from oppreſſion, or call-in law to the aſſiſtance of juſtice, her will was eluded by the executors, and no part of the money was ever paid.

He was, however, not yet wholly abandoned. The Lady Maſon ſtill continued her care, and directed him to be placed at a ſmall grammar-ſchool near St. Alban's, where he was called by the name of his nurſe, without the leaſt intimation that he had a claim to any other.

Here he was initiated in literature, and paſſed through ſeveral of the claſſes, with what rapidity or what applauſe cannot now be known. As he always ſpoke with reſpect of his maſter, it is probable that the mean rank, in which he then appeared, did not hinder his genius from being

being diſtinguiſhed, or his induſtry from being rewarded; and if in ſo low a ſtate he obtained diſtinction and rewards, it is not likely that they were gained but by genius and induſtry.

It is very reaſonable to conjecture, that his application was equal to his abilities, becauſe his improvement was more than proportioned to the opportunities which he enjoyed; nor can it be doubted, that if his earlieſt productions had been preſerved, like thoſe of happier ſtudents, we might in ſome have found vigorous ſallies of that ſprightly humour, which diſtinguiſhes THE AUTHOR TO BE LET, and in others ſtrong touches of that ardent imagination which painted the ſolemn ſcenes of THE WANDERER.

While he was thus cultivating his genius, his father the Earl Rivers was ſeized with a diſtemper, which in a ſhort time put an end to his life. He had frequently inquired after his ſon, and had always been amuſed with fallacious and evaſive anſwers; but, being now in his own opinion on his death-bed, he thought it his duty to provide for him among his other natural children, and therefore demanded a poſitive account of him, with an importunity not to be diverted or denied. His mother, who could no longer refuſe an anſwer, determined at leaſt to give ſuch as ſhould cut him off for ever from that happineſs which competence affords, and therefore declared that he was dead; which is per-

haps the first instance of a lye invented by a mother to deprive her son of a provision which was designed him by another, and which she could not expect herself, though he should lose it.

This was therefore an act of wickedness which could not be defeated, because it could not be suspected; the Earl did not imagine that there could exist in a human form a mother that would ruin her son without enriching herself, and therefore bestowed upon some other person six thousand pounds, which he had in his will bequeathed to Savage.

The same cruelty which incited his mother to intercept this provision which had been intended him, prompted her in a short time to another project, a project worthy of such a disposition. She endeavoured to rid herself from the danger of being at any time made known to him, by sending him secretly to the American plantations *.

By whose kindness this scheme was counteracted, or by what interposition she was induced to lay aside her design, I know not; it is not improbable that the Lady Mason might persuade or compel her to desist, or perhaps she could not easily find accomplices wicked enough to concur

* Savage's Preface to his Miscellany.

in

in ſo cruel an action; for it may be conceived, that thoſe who had by a long gradation of guilt hardened their hearts againſt the ſenſe of common wickedneſs, would yet be ſhocked at the deſign of a mother to expoſe her ſon to ſlavery and want, to expoſe him without intereſt, and without provocation; and Savage might on this occaſion find protectors and advocates among thoſe who had long traded in crimes, and whom compaſſion had never touched before.

Being hindered, by whatever means, from baniſhing him into another country, ſhe formed ſoon after a ſcheme for burying him in poverty and obſcurity in his own; and, that his ſtation of life, if not the place of his reſidence, might keep him for ever at a diſtance from her, ſhe ordered him to be placed with a ſhoemaker in Holborn, that, after the uſual time of trial, he might become his apprentice *.

It is generally reported, that this project was for ſome time ſucceſsful, and that Savage was employed at the awl longer than he was willing to confeſs; nor was it perhaps any great advantage to him, that an unexpected diſcovery determined him to quit his occupation.

About this time his nurſe, who had always treated him as her own ſon, died; and it was

* Preface to Savage's Miſcellanies.

natural

natural for him to take care of those effects, which by her death were, as he imagined, become his own; he therefore went to her house, opened her boxes, and examined her papers, among which he found some letters written to her by the Lady Mason, which informed him of his birth, and the reasons for which it was concealed.

He was now no longer satisfied with the employment which had been allotted him, but thought he had a right to share the affluence of his mother; and therefore without scruple applied to her as her son, and made use of every art to awaken her tenderness, and attract her regard. But neither his letters, nor the interposition of those friends which his merit or his distress procured him, made any impression upon her mind: She still resolved to neglect, though she could no longer disown him.

It was to no purpose that he frequently solicited her to admit him to see her; she avoided him with the most vigilant precaution, and ordered him to be excluded from her house, by whomsoever he might be introduced, and what reason soever he might give for entering it.

Savage was at the same time so touched with the discovery of his real mother, that it was his frequent practice to walk in the dark evenings * for several hours before her door, in

* See the PLAIN DEALER.

hopes

hopes of seeing her as she might come by accident to the window, or cross her apartment with a candle in her hand.

But all his assiduity and tenderness were without effect, for he could neither soften her heart, nor open her hand, and was reduced to the utmost miseries of want, while he was endeavouring to awaken the affection of a mother: He was therefore obliged to seek some other means of support; and, having no profession, became by necessity an author.

At this time the attention of all the literary world was engrossed by the Bangorian controversy, which filled the press with pamphlets, and the coffee-houses with disputants. Of this subject, as most popular, he made choice for his first attempt, and without any other knowledge of the question, than he had casually collected from conversation, published a poem against the bishop.

What was the success or merit of this performance, I know not; it was probably lost among the innumerable pamphlets to which that dispute gave occasion. Mr. Savage was himself in a little time ashamed of it, and endeavoured to suppress it, by destroying all the copies that he could collect.

He then attempted a more gainful kind of writing *, and in his eighteenth year offered to

* Jacob's Lives of Dramatic Poets.

the ſtage a comedy borrowed from a Spaniſh plot, which was refuſed by the players, and was therefore given by him to Mr. Bullock, who, having more intereſt, made ſome ſlight alterations, and brought it upon the ſtage, under the title of * WOMAN'S A RIDDLE, but allowed the unhappy author no part of the profit.

Not diſcouraged however at his repulſe, he wrote two years afterwards LOVE IN A VEIL, another comedy, borrowed likewiſe from the Spaniſh, but with little better ſucceſs than before; for though it was received and acted, yet it appeared ſo late in the year, that the author obtained no other advantage from it, than the acquaintance of Sir Richard Steele, and Mr. Wilks; by whom he was pitied, careſſed, and relieved.

Sir Richard Steele, having declared in his favour with all the ardour of benevolence which conſtituted his character, promoted his intereſt with the utmoſt zeal, related his misfortunes, applauded his merit, took all the opportunities of recommending him, and aſſerted, that †"the "inhumanity of his mother had given him a "right to find every good man his father."

* This play was printed firſt in 8vo; and afterwards in 12mo, the fifth edition.

† PLAIN DEALER.

Nor

Nor was Mr. Savage admitted to his acquaintance only, but to his confidence, of which he ſometimes related an inſtance too extraordinary to be omitted, as it affords a very juſt idea of his patron's character.

He was once deſired by Sir Richard, with an air of the utmoſt importance, to come very early to his houſe the next morning. Mr. Savage came as he had promiſed, found the chariot at the door, and Sir Richard waiting for him, and ready to go out. What was intended, and whither they were to go, Savage could not conjecture, and was not willing to enquire; but immediately ſeated himſelf with Sir Richard; the coachman was ordered to drive, and they hurried with the utmoſt expedition to Hyde-Park Corner, where they ſtopped at a petty tavern, and retired to a private room. Sir Richard then informed him, that he intended to publiſh a pamphlet, and that he had deſired him to come thither that he might write for him. They ſoon ſat down to the work. Sir Richard dictated, and Savage wrote, till the dinner that had been ordered was put upon the table. Savage was ſurprized at the meanneſs of the entertainment, and after ſome heſitation ventured to aſk for wine, which Sir Richard, not without reluctance, ordered to be brought. They then finiſhed their dinner, and proceeded

in

in their pamphlet, which they concluded in the afternoon.

Mr. Savage then imagined his taſk over, and expected that Sir Richard would call for the reckoning, and return home; but his expectations deceived him, for Sir Richard told him, that he was without money, and that the pamphlet muſt be ſold before the dinner could be paid for; and Savage was therefore obliged to go and offer their new production to ſale for two guineas, which with ſome difficulty he obtained. Sir Richard then returned home, having retired that day only to avoid his creditors, and compoſed the pamphlet only to diſcharge his reckoning.

Mr. Savage related another fact equally uncommon, which, though it has no relation to his life, ought to be preſerved. Sir Richard Steele having one day invited to his houſe a great number of perſons of the firſt quality, they were ſurprized at the number of liveries which ſurrounded the table; and after dinner, when wine and mirth had ſet them free from the obſervation of rigid ceremony, one of them enquired of Sir Richard, how ſuch an expenſive train of domeſtics could be conſiſtent with his fortune. Sir Richard very frankly confeſſed, that they were fellows of whom he would very willingly be rid. And being then aſked, why he

he did not diſcharge them, declared that they were bailiffs who had introduced themſelves with an execution, and whom, ſince he could not ſend them away, he had thought it convenient to embelliſh with liveries, that they might do him credit while they ſtaid.

His friends were diverted with the expedient, and, by paying the debt, diſcharged their attendance, having obliged Sir Richard to promiſe that they ſhould never again find him graced with a retinue of the ſame kind.

Under ſuch a tutor, Mr. Savage was not likely to learn prudence or frugality; and perhaps many of the misfortunes, which the want of thoſe virtues brought upon him in the following parts of his life, might be juſtly imputed to ſo unimproving an example.

Nor did the kindneſs of Sir Richard end in common favours. He propoſed to have eſtabliſhed him in ſome ſettled ſcheme of life, and to have contracted a kind of alliance with him, by marrying him to a natural daughter, on whom he intended to beſtow a thouſand pounds. But though he was always laviſh of future bounties, he conducted his affairs in ſuch a manner, that he was very ſeldom able to keep his promiſes, or execute his own intentions; and, as he was never able to raiſe the ſum which he had offered, the marriage was delayed. In the mean time he was officiouſly informed, that Mr. Savage had ridiculed

ridiculed him; by which he was so much exasperated, that he withdrew the allowance which he had paid him, and never afterwards admitted him to his house.

It is not indeed unlikely that Savage might, by his imprudence, expose himself to the malice of a tale-bearer; for his patron had many follies, which as his discernment easily discovered, his imagination might sometimes incite him to mention too ludicrously. A little knowledge of the world is sufficient to discover that such weakness is very common, and that there are few who do not sometimes, in the wantonness of thoughtless mirth, or the heat of transient resentment, speak of their friends and benefactors with levity and contempt, though in their cooler moments they want neither sense of their kindness, nor reverence for their virtue. The fault therefore of Mr. Savage was rather negligence than ingratitude; but Sir Richard must likewise be acquitted of severity, for who is there that can patiently bear contempt from one whom he has relieved and supported, whose establishment he has laboured, and whose interest he has promoted?

He was now again abandoned to fortune, without any other friend than Mr. Wilks; a man, who, whatever were his abilities or skill as an actor, deserves at least to be remembered

for his virtues *, which are not often to be found in the world, and perhaps leſs often in his profeſſion than in others. To be humane, generous, and candid, is a very high degree of merit in any caſe; but thoſe qualities deſerve ſtill greater praiſe, when they are found in that condition, which makes almoſt every other man, for whatever reaſon, contemptuous, inſolent, petulant, ſelfiſh, and brutal.

As Mr. Wilks was one of thoſe to whom calamity ſeldom complained without relief, he naturally took an unfortunate wit into his pro-

* As it is a loſs to mankind when any good action is forgotten, I ſhall inſert another inſtance of Mr. Wilks's generoſity, very little known. Mr. Smith, a gentleman educated at Dublin, being hindered by an impediment in his pronunciation from engaging in orders, for which his friends deſigned him, left his own country, and came to London in queſt of employment, but found his ſolicitations fruitleſs, and his neceſſities every day more preſſing. In this diſtreſs he wrote a tragedy, and offered it to the players, by whom it was rejected. Thus were his laſt hopes defeated, and he had no other proſpect than of the moſt deplorable poverty. But Mr. Wilks thought his performance, though not perfect, at leaſt worthy of ſome reward, and therefore offered him a benefit. This favour he improved with ſo much diligence, that the houſe afforded him a conſiderable ſum, with which he went to Leyden, applied himſelf to the ſtudy of phyſic; and proſecuted his deſign with ſo much diligence and ſucceſs, that, when Dr. Boerhaave was deſired by the Czarina to recommend proper perſons to introduce into Ruſſia the practice and ſtudy of phyſic, Dr. Smith was one of thoſe whom he ſelected. He had a conſiderable penſion ſettled on him at his arrival, and was one of the chief phyſicians at the Ruſſian court.

tection, and not only assisted him in any casual distresses, but continued an equal and steady kindness to the time of his death.

By his interposition Mr. Savage once obtained from his mother * fifty pounds, and a promise of one hundred and fifty more; but it was the fate of this unhappy man, that few promises of any advantage to him were performed. His mother was infected among others with the general madness of the South Sea traffic; and, having been disappointed in her expectations, refused to pay what perhaps nothing but the prospect of sudden affluence prompted her to promise.

Being thus obliged to depend upon the friendship of Mr. Wilks, he was consequently an assiduous frequenter of the theatres; and in a short time the amusements of the stage took such possession of his mind, that he never was absent from a play in several years.

This constant attendance naturally procured him the acquaintance of the players, and, among others, of Mrs. Oldfield, who was so much pleased with his conversation, and touched with his misfortunes, that she allowed him a settled pension of fifty pounds a year, which was during her life regularly paid.

* This I write upon the credit of the author of his life, which was published 1727.

That

That this act of generoſity may receive its due praiſe, and that the good actions of Mrs. Oldfield may not be ſullied by her general character, it is proper to mention what Mr. Savage often declared in the ſtrongeſt terms, that he never ſaw her alone, or in any other place than behind the ſcenes.

At her death he endeavoured to ſhew his gratitude in the moſt decent manner, by wearing mourning as for a mother; but did not celebrate her in elegies, becauſe he knew that too great profuſion of praiſe would only have revived thoſe faults which his natural equity did not allow him to think leſs, becauſe they were committed by one who favoured him; but of which, though his virtue would not endeavour to palliate them, his gratitude would not ſuffer him to prolong the memory, or diffuſe the cenſure.

In his WANDERER, he has indeed taken an opportunity of mentioning her, but celebrates her not for her virtue, but her beauty, an excellence which none ever denied her: this is the only encomium with which he has rewarded her liberality, and perhaps he has even in this been too laviſh of his praiſe. He ſeems to have thought, that never to mention his benefactreſs would have an appearance of ingratitude, though to have dedicated any particular performance to her memory would have only betrayed an officious partiality, that, with-

out exalting her character, would have depreſſed his own.

He had ſometimes, by the kindneſs of Mr. Wilks, the advantage of a benefit, on which occaſions he often received uncommon marks of regard and compaſſion; and was once told by the Duke of Dorſet, that it was juſt to conſider him as an injured nobleman, and that in his opinion the nobility ought to think themſelves obliged, without ſolicitation, to take every opportunity of ſupporting him by their countenance and patronage. But he had generally the mortification to hear that the whole intereſt of his mother was employed to fruſtrate his applications, and that ſhe never left any expedient untried, by which he might be cut off from the poſſibility of ſupporting life. The ſame diſpoſition ſhe endeavoured to diffuſe among all thoſe over whom nature or fortune gave her any influence, and indeed ſucceeded too well in her deſign; but could not always propagate her effrontery with her cruelty, for ſome of thoſe, whom ſhe incited againſt him, were aſhamed of their own conduct, and boaſted of that relief which they never gave him.

In this cenſure I do not indiſcriminately involve all his relations; for he has mentioned with gratitude the humanity of one Lady, whoſe name I am now unable to recollect, and to whom therefore I cannot pay the praiſes which ſhe

ſhe deſerves for having acted well in oppoſition to influence, precept, and example.

The puniſhment which our laws inflict upon thoſe parents who murder their infants is well known, nor has its juſtice ever been conteſted; but if they deſerve death, who deſtroy a child in its birth, what pains can be ſevere enough for her who forbears to deſtroy him only to inflict ſharper miſeries upon him; who prolongs his life only to make it miſerable; and who expoſes him, without care and without pity, to the malice of oppreſſion, the caprices of chance, and the temptations of poverty; who rejoices to ſee him overwhelmed with calamities; and, when his own induſtry, or the charity of others, has enabled him to riſe for a ſhort time above his miſeries, plunges him again into his former diſtreſs?

The kindneſs of his friends not affording him any conſtant ſupply, and the proſpect of improving his fortune by enlarging his acquaintance, neceſſarily leading him to places of expence, he found it neceſſary * to endeavour once more at dramatic poetry, for which he was now better qualified by a more extenſive knowledge, and longer obſervation. But having been unſucceſsful in comedy, though rather for want of opportunities than genius, he reſolved now to try whether he ſhould not be more fortunate in exhibiting a tragedy.

* In 1724.

The ſtory which he choſe for the ſubject, was that of Sir Thomas Overbury, a ſtory well adapted to the ſtage, though perhaps not far enough removed from the preſent age, to admit properly the fictions neceſſary to complete the plan: for the mind, which naturally loves truth, is always moſt offended with the violation of thoſe truths of which we are moſt certain; and we of courſe conceive thoſe facts moſt certain, which approach neareſt to our own time.

Out of this ſtory he formed a tragedy, which, if the circumſtances in which he wrote it be conſidered, will afford at once an uncommon proof of ſtrength of genius, and evenneſs of mind, of a ſerenity not to to be ruffled, and an imagination not to be ſuppreſſed.

During a conſiderable part of the time, in which he was employed upon this performance, he was without lodging, and often without meat; nor had he any other conveniences for ſtudy than the fields or the ſtreet allowed him; there he uſed to walk and form his ſpeeches, and afterwards ſtep into a ſhop, beg for a few moments the uſe of the pen and ink, and write down what he had compoſed upon paper, which he had picked up by accident.

If the performance of a writer thus diſtreſſed is not perfect, its faults ought ſurely to be imputed

imputed to a cauſe very different from want of genius, and muſt rather excite pity than provoke cenſure.

But when under theſe diſcouragements the tragedy was finiſhed, there yet remained the labour of introducing it on the ſtage, an undertaking, which, to an ingenuous mind, was in a very high degree vexatious and diſguſting; for, having little intereſt or reputation, he was obliged to ſubmit himſelf wholly to the players, and admit, with whatever reluctance, the emendations of Mr. Cibber, which he always conſidered as the diſgrace of his performance.

He had indeed in Mr. Hill another critic of a very different claſs, from whoſe friendſhip he received great aſſiſtance on many occaſions, and whom he never mentioned but with the utmoſt tenderneſs and regard. He had been for ſome time diſtinguiſhed by him with very particular kindneſs, and on this occaſion it was natural to apply to him as an author of an eſtabliſhed character. He therefore ſent this tragedy to him, with a ſhort copy of *verſes, in which he deſired his correction. Mr. Hill, whoſe humanity and politeneſs are generally known, readily complied with his requeſt; but as he is remarkable for ſingularity of ſentiment, and bold experiments in language, Mr. Savage did not think his play much improved by his innovation, and

* Printed in this volume.

had even at that time the courage to reject ſeveral paſſages which he could not approve; and, what is ſtill more laudable, Mr. Hill had the generoſity not to reſent the neglect of his alterations, but wrote the * prologue and epilogue, in which he touches on the circumſtances of the author with great tenderneſs.

After all theſe obſtructions and compliances, he was only able to bring his play upon the ſtage in the ſummer, when the chief actors had retired, and the reſt were in poſſeſſion of the houſe for their own advantage. Among theſe, of Mr. Savage was admitted to play the part Sir Thomas Overbury, by which he gained no great reputation, the theatre being a province for which nature ſeemed not to have deſigned him; for neither his voice, look, nor geſture, were ſuch as were expected on the ſtage; and he was ſo much aſhamed of having been reduced to appear as a player, that he always blotted out his name from the liſt, when a copy of his tragedy was to be ſhown to his friends.

In the publication of his performance he was more ſucceſsful, for the rays of genius that glimmered in it, that glimmered through all the miſts which poverty and Cibber had been able to ſpread over it, procured him the notice

* See Savage's Works, vol. I. p. 148. 186.

and

and eſteem of many perſons eminent for their rank, their virtue, and their wit.

Of this play, acted, printed, and dedicated, the accumulated profits aroſe to an hundred pounds, which he thought at that time a very large ſum, having been never maſter of ſo much before.

In the Dedication *, for which he received ten guineas, there is nothing remarkable. The Preface contains a very liberal encomium on the blooming excellencies of Mr. Theophilus Cibber, which Mr. Savage could not in the latter part of his life ſee his friends about to read without ſnatching the play out of their hands. The generoſity of Mr. Hill did not end on this occaſion; for afterwards, when Mr. Savage's neceſſities returned, he encouraged a ſubſcription to a Miſcellany of Poems in a very extraordinary manner, by publiſhing his ſtory in the PLAIN DEALER †, with ſome affecting lines, which he aſſerts to have been written by Mr. Savage upon the treatment received by him from his mother, but of which

* To Herbert Tryſt, Eſq. of Herefordſhire.

† The PLAIN DEALER was a periodical paper, written by Mr. Hill and Mr. Bond, whom Mr. Savage called the two contending powers of light and darkneſs. They wrote by turns each ſix Eſſays; and the character of the work was obſerved regularly to riſe in Mr. Hill's weeks, and fall in Mr. Bond's.

he

he was himſelf the author, as Mr. Savage afterwards declared. Theſe lines, and the paper in which they were inſerted, had a very powerful effect upon all but his mother, whom, by making her cruelty more public, they only hardened in her averſion.

Mr. Hill not only promoted the ſubſcription to the Miſcellany, but furniſhed likewiſe the greateſt part of the Poems of which it is compoſed, and particularly THE HAPPY MAN, which he publiſhed as a ſpecimen.

The ſubſcriptions of thoſe whom theſe papers ſhould influence to patronize merit in diſtreſs, without any other ſolicitation, were directed to be left at Button's coffee-houſe; and Mr. Savage going thither a few days afterwards, without expectation of any effect from his propoſal, found to his ſurprize ſeventy guineas *, which had been ſent him in conſequence of the compaſſion excited by Mr. Hill's pathetic repreſentation.

To this Miſcellany he wrote a Preface, in which he gives an account of his mother's

* The names of thoſe who ſo generouſly contributed to his relief, having been mentioned in a former account, ought not to be omitted here. They were the Dutcheſs of Cleveland, Lady Cheyney, Lady Caſtlemain, Lady Gower, Lady Lechmere, the Dutcheſs Dowager and Dutcheſs of Rutland, Lady Strafford, the Counteſs Dowager of Warwick, Mrs. Mary Floyer, Mrs. Sofuel Noel, Duke of Rutland, Lord Gainſborough, Lord Milſington, Mr. John Savage.

cruelty in a very uncommon ſtrain of humour, and with a gaiety of imagination, which the ſucceſs of his ſubſcription probably produced.

The Dedication is addreſſed to the Lady Mary Wortley Montague, whom he flatters without reſerve, and, to confeſs the truth, with very little * art. The ſame obſervation may be extended to all his Dedications: his compliments are conſtrained and violent, heaped together without the grace of order, or the decency of introduction: he ſeems to have written his Panegyrics for the peruſal only of his patrons, and to have imagined that he had no other taſk than to pamper them with praiſes however groſs, and that flattery would make its way to the heart, without the aſſiſtance of elegance or invention.

* This the following extract from it will prove.

—"Since our country has been honoured with the glory of "your wit, as elevated and immortal as your ſoul, it no "longer remains a doubt whether your ſex have ſtrength of "mind in proportion to their ſweetneſs. There is ſomething "in your verſes as diſtinguiſhed as your air.—They are as "ſtrong as truth, as deep as reaſon, as clear as innocence, "and as ſmooth as beauty—They contain a nameleſs and "peculiar mixture of force and grace, which is at once "ſo movingly ſerene, and ſo majeſtically lovely, that it is "too amiable to appear any where but in your eyes and in "your writings."

"As fortune is not more my enemy than I am the enemy "of flattery, I know not how I can forbear this application to "your Ladyſhip, becauſe there is ſcarce a poſſibility that I "ſhould ſay more than I believe, when I am ſpeaking of your "Excellence."—

Soon

Soon afterwards, the death of the king furniſhed a general ſubject for a poetical conteſt, in which Mr. Savage engaged, and is allowed to have carried the prize of honour from his competitors; but I know not whether he gained by his performance any other advantage than the increaſe of his reputation; though it muſt certainly have been with farther views that he prevailed upon himſelf to attempt a ſpecies of writing, of which all the topics had been long before exhauſted, and which was made at once difficult by the multitudes that had failed in it, and thoſe that had ſucceeded.

He was now advancing in reputation, and though frequently involved in very diſtreſsful perplexities, appeared however to be gaining upon mankind, when both his fame and his life were endangered by an event, of which it is not yet determined, whether it ought to be mentioned as a crime or a calamity.

On the 20th of November 1727, Mr. Savage came from Richmond, where he then lodged, that he might purſue his ſtudies with leſs interruption, with an intent to diſcharge another lodging which he had in Weſtminſter; and accidentally meeting two gentlemen his acquaintances, whoſe names were Merchant and Gregory, he went in with them to a neighbouring coffee-houſe, and ſat drinking till it was late, it being in no time of Mr. Savage's life any

part

part of his character to be the firſt of the company that deſired to ſeparate. He would willingly have gone to bed in the ſame houſe, but there was not room for the whole company, and therefore they agreed to ramble about the ſtreets, and divert themſelves with ſuch amuſements as ſhould offer themſelves till morning.

In their walk they happened unluckily to diſcover a light in Robinſon's coffee-houſe, near Charing-croſs, and therefore went in. Merchant, with ſome rudeneſs, demanded a room, and was told that there was a good fire in the next parlour, which the company were about to leave, being then paying their reckoning. Merchant, not ſatisfied with this anſwer, ruſhed into the room, and was followed by his companions. He then petulantly placed himſelf between the company and the fire, and ſoon after kicked down the table. This produced a quarrel, ſwords were drawn on both ſides, and one Mr. James Sinclair was killed. Savage, having wounded likewiſe a maid that held him, forced his way with Merchant out of the houſe; but being intimidated and confuſed, without reſolution either to fly or ſtay, they were taken in a back-court by one of the company and ſome ſoldiers, whom he had called to his aſſiſtance.

Being ſecured and guarded that night, they were in the morning carried before three juſtices, who

who committed them to the Gatehouſe, from whence, upon the death of Mr. Sinclair, which happened the ſame day, they were removed in the night to Newgate, where they were however treated with ſome diſtinction, exempted from the ignominy of chains, and confined, not among the common criminals, but in the Preſs-yard.

When the day of trial came, the court was crouded in a very unuſual manner, and the public appeared to intereſt itſelf as in a cauſe of general concern. The witneſſes againſt Mr. Savage and his friends were, the woman who kept the houſe, which was a houſe of ill fame, and her maid, the men who were in the room with Mr. Sinclair, and a woman of the town, who had been drinking with them, and with whom one of them had been ſeen in bed. They ſwore in general, that Merchant gave the provocation, which Savage and Gregory drew their ſwords to juſtify; that Savage drew firſt, and that he ſtabbed Sinclair when he was not in a poſture of defence, or while Gregory commanded his ſword; that after he had given the thruſt he turned pale, and would have retired, but that the maid clung round him, and one of the company endeavoured to detain him, from whom he broke, by cutting the maid on the head, but was afterwards taken in a court.

There

There was ſome difference in their depoſitions; one did not ſee Savage give the wound, another ſaw it given when Sinclair held his point towards the ground; and the woman of the town aſſerted, that ſhe did not ſee Sinclair's ſword at all: this difference however was very far from amounting to inconſiſtency; but it was ſufficient to ſhew, that the hurry of the diſpute was ſuch, that it was not eaſy to diſcover the truth with relation to particular circumſtances, and that therefore ſome deductions were to be made from the credibility of the teſtimonies.

Sinclair had declared ſeveral times before his death, that he received his wound from Savage, nor did Savage at his trial deny the fact, but endeavoured partly to extenuate it, by urging the ſuddenneſs of the whole action, and the impoſſibility of any ill deſign, or premeditated malice, and partly to juſtify it by the neceſſity of ſelf-defence, and the hazard of his own life, if he had loſt that opportunity of giving the thruſt: he obſerved, that neither reaſon nor law obliged a man to wait for the blow which was threatened, and which, if he ſhould ſuffer it, he might never be able to return; that it was always allowable to prevent an aſſault, and to preſerve life by taking away that of the adverſary, by whom it was endangered.

With regard to the violence with which he endeavoured to eſcape, he declared, that it was

was not his design to fly from justice, or decline a trial, but to avoid the expences and severities of a prison; and that he intended to have appeared at the bar without compulsion.

This defence, which took up more than an hour, was heard by the multitude that thronged the court with the most attentive and respectful silence: those who thought he ought not to be acquitted, owned that applause could not be refused him; and those who before pitied his misfortunes, now reverenced his abilities.

The witnesses which appeared against him were proved to be persons of characters which did not entitle them to much credit; a common strumpet, a woman by whom strumpets were entertained, and a man by whom they were supported; and the character of Savage was by several persons of distinction asserted to be that of a modest inoffensive man, not inclined to broils, or to insolence, and who had, to that time, been only known for his misfortunes and his wit.

Had his audience been his judges, he had undoubtedly been acquitted; but Mr. Page, who was then upon the bench, treated him with his usual insolence and severity, and when he had summed up the evidence, endeavoured to exasperate the jury, as Mr. Savage used to relate it, with this eloquent harangue:

Gentlemen

'Gentlemen of the jury, you are to consider 'that Mr. Savage is a very great man, a much 'greater man than you or I, gentlemen of the 'jury; that he wears very fine clothes, much 'finer clothes than you or I, gentlemen of the 'jury; that he has abundance of money in his 'pocket, much more money than you or I, 'gentlemen of the jury; but, gentlemen of the 'jury, is it not a very hard case, gentlemen of 'the jury, that Mr. Savage should therefore 'kill you or me, gentlemen of the jury?"

Mr. Savage hearing his defence thus misrepresented, and the men who were to decide his fate incited against him by invidious comparisons, resolutely asserted, that his cause was not candidly explained, and began to recapitulate what he had before said with regard to his condition, and the necessity of endeavouring to escape the expences of imprisonment; but the judge having ordered him to be silent, and repeated his orders without effect, commanded that he should be taken from the bar by force.

The jury then heard the opinion of the judge, that good characters were of no weight against positive evidence, though they might turn the scale where it was doubtful; and that though, when two men attack each other, the death of either is only manslaughter; but where one is the aggressor, as in the case before them, and,

in purſuance of his firſt attack, kills the other, the law ſuppoſes the action, however ſudden, to be malicious. They then deliberated upon their verdict, and determined that Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were guilty of murder, and Mr. Merchant, who had no ſword, only of man-ſlaughter.

Thus ended this memorable trial, which laſted eight hours. Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were conducted back to priſon, where they were more cloſely confined, and loaded with irons of fifty pounds weight: four days afterwards they were ſent back to the court to receive ſentence; on which occaſion Mr. Savage made, as far as it could be retained in memory, the following ſpeech.

"It is now, my Lord, too late to offer any "thing by way of defence or vindication; nor "can we expect from your Lordſhips, in this "court, but the ſentence which the law re-"quires you, as judges, to pronounce againſt "men of our calamitous condition.—But we "are alſo perſuaded, that as mere men, and "out of this ſeat of rigorous juſtice, you are "ſuſceptive of the tender paſſions, and too "humane, not to commiſerate the unhappy "ſituation of thoſe, whom the law ſometimes "perhaps — exacts — from you to pronounce "upon. No doubt you diſtinguiſh between "offences,

"offences, which ariſe out of premeditation, "and a diſpoſition habituated to vice or immo- "rality, and tranſgreſſions, which are the un- "happy and unforeſeen effects of caſual abſence "of reaſon, and ſudden impulſe of paſſion: "we therefore hope you will contribute all you "can to an extenſion of that mercy, which the "gentlemen of the jury have been pleaſed to "ſhew Mr. Merchant, who (allowing facts as "ſworn againſt us by the evidence) has led us "into this our calamity. I hope this will not "be conſtrued, as if we meant to reflect upon "that gentleman, or remove any thing from us "upon him, or that we repine the more at our "fate, becauſe he has no participation of it: "No, my Lord! For my part, I declare no- "thing could more ſoften my grief, than to be "without any companion in ſo great a misfor- "tune *."

Mr. Savage had now no hopes of life, but from the mercy of the crown, which was very earn- eſtly ſolicited by his friends, and which, with whatever difficulty the ſtory may obtain belief, was obſtructed only by his mother.

To prejudice the Queen againſt him, ſhe made uſe of an incident, which was omitted in the order of time, that it might be mentioned

* Mr. Savage's Life.

together with the purpoſe which it was made to ſerve. Mr. Savage, when he had diſcovered his birth, had an inceſſant deſire to ſpeak to his mother, who always avoided him in public, and refuſed him admiſſion into her houſe. One evening walking, as it was his cuſtom, in the ſtreet that ſhe inhabited, he ſaw the door of her houſe by accident open; he entered it, and, finding no perſon in the paſſage to hinder him, went up ſtairs to ſalute her. She diſcovered him before he could enter her chamber, alarmed the family with the moſt diſtreſsful outcries, and when ſhe had by her ſcreams gathered them about her, ordered them to drive out of the houſe that villain, who had forced himſelf in upon her, and endeavoured to murder her. Savage, who had attempted with the moſt ſubmiſſive tenderneſs to ſoften her rage, hearing her utter ſo deteſtable an accuſation, thought it prudent to retire; and, I believe, never attempted afterwards to ſpeak to her.

But, ſhocked as he was with her falſhood and her cruelty, he imagined that ſhe intended no other uſe of her lye, than to ſet herſelf free from his embraces and ſolicitations, and was very far from ſuſpecting that ſhe would treaſure it in her memory, as an inſtrument of future wickedneſs, or that ſhe would endeavour for this fictitious aſſault to deprive him of his life.

But

But when the Queen was ſolicited for his pardon, and informed of the ſevere treatment which he had ſuffered from his judge, ſhe anſwered, that, however unjuſtifiable might be the manner of his trial, or whatever extenuation the action for which he was condemned might admit, ſhe could not think that man a proper object of the King's mercy, who had been capable of entering his mother's houſe in the night, with an intent to murder her.

By whom this atrocious calumny had been tranſmitted to the Queen; whether ſhe that invented had the front to relate it; whether ſhe found any one weak enough to credit it, or corrupt enough to concur with her in her hateful deſign, I know not: but methods had been taken to perſuade the Queen ſo ſtrongly of the truth of it, that ſhe for a long time refuſed to hear any of thoſe who petitioned for his life.

Thus had Savage periſhed by the evidence of a bawd, a ſtrumpet, and his mother, had not juſtice and compaſſion procured him an advocate of rank too great to be rejected unheard, and of virtue too eminent to be heard without being believed. His merit and his calamities happened to reach the ear of the Counteſs of Hertford, who engaged in his ſupport with all the tenderneſs that is excited by pity, and all the zeal which is kindled by generoſity, and, demanding an audience of the Queen, laid be-

fore her the whole ſeries of his mother's cruelty, expoſed the improbability of an accuſation by which he was charged with an intent to commit a murder that could produce no advantage, and ſoon convinced her how little his former conduct could deſerve to be mentioned as a reaſon for extraordinary ſeverity.

The interpoſition of this Lady was ſo ſucceſsful, that he was ſoon after admitted to bail, and, on the 9th of March 1728, pleaded the King's pardon.

It is natural to enquire upon what motives his mother could perſecute him in a manner ſo outrageous and implacable; for what reaſon ſhe could employ all the arts of malice, and all the ſnares of calumny, to take away the life of her own ſon, of a ſon who never injured her, who was never ſupported by her expence, nor obſtructed any proſpect of pleaſure or advantage; why ſhe ſhould endeavour to deſtroy him by a lye—a lye which could not gain credit, but muſt vaniſh of itſelf at the firſt moment of examination, and of which only this can be ſaid to make it probable, that it may be obſerved from her conduct, that the moſt execrable crimes are ſometimes committed without apparent temptation.

This mother is ſtill alive, and may perhaps even yet, though her malice was ſo often defeated, enjoy the pleaſure of reflecting, that the

the life, which ſhe often endeavoured to deſtroy, was at leaſt ſhortened by her maternal offices; that though ſhe could not tranſport her ſon to the plantations, bury him in the ſhop of a mechanic, or haſten the hand of the public executioner, ſhe has yet had the ſatisfaction of imbittering all his hours, and forcing him into exigencies that hurried on his death.

It is by no means neceſſary to aggravate the enormity of this woman's conduct, by placing it in oppoſition to that of the Counteſs of Hertford; no one can fail to obſerve how much more amiable it is to relieve, than to oppreſs, and to reſcue innocence from deſtruction, than to deſtroy without an injury.

Mr. Savage, during his impriſonment, his trial, and the time in which he lay under ſentence of death, behaved with great firmneſs and equality of mind, and confirmed by his fortitude the eſteem of thoſe who before admired him for his abilities. The peculiar circumſtances of his life were made more generally known by a ſhort account *, which was then publiſhed, and of which ſeveral thouſands were in a few weeks diſperſed over the nation; and the compaſſion of mankind operated ſo powerfully in his favour, that he was enabled, by

* Written by Mr. Beckingham and another gentleman.

frequent preſents, not only to ſupport himſelf, but to aſſiſt Mr. Gregory in priſon; and, when he was pardoned and releaſed, he found the number of his friends not leſſened.

The nature of the act for which he had been tried was in itſelf doubtful; of the evidences which appeared againſt him, the character of the man was not unexceptionable, that of the women notoriouſly infamous: ſhe, whoſe teſtimony chiefly influenced the jury to condemn him, afterwards retracted her aſſertions. He always himſelf denied that he was drunk, as had been generally reported. Mr. Gregory, who is now Collector of Antigua, is ſaid to declare him far leſs criminal than he was imagined, even by ſome who favoured him: and Page himſelf afterwards confeſſed, that he had treated him with uncommon rigour. When all theſe particulars are rated together, perhaps the memory of Savage may not be much ſullied by his trial.

Some time after he had obtained his liberty, he met in the ſtreet the woman that had ſworn with ſo much malignity againſt him. She informed him, that ſhe was in diſtreſs, and, with a degree of confidence not eaſily attainable, deſired him to relieve her. He, inſtead of inſulting her miſery, and taking pleaſure in the calamities of one who had brought his life into danger, reproved her gently for her perjury; and, changing

changing the only guinea that he had, divided it equally between her and himſelf.

This is an action which in ſome ages would have made a ſaint, and perhaps in others a hero, and which, without any hyperbolical encomiums, muſt be allowed to be an inſtance of uncommon generoſity, an act of complicated virtue; by which he at once relieved the poor, corrected the vicious, and forgave an enemy; by which he at once remitted the ſtrongeſt provocations, and exerciſed the moſt ardent charity.

Compaſſion was indeed the diſtinguiſhing quality of Savage; he never appeared inclined to take advantage of weakneſs, to attack the defenceleſs, or to preſs upon the falling: whoever was diſtreſſed was certain at leaſt of his good wiſhes; and when he could give no aſſiſtance to extricate them from misfortunes, he endeavoured to ſooth them by ſympathy and tenderneſs.

But when his heart was not ſoftened by the ſight of miſery, he was ſometimes obſtinate in his reſentment, and did not quickly loſe the remembrance of an injury. He always continued to ſpeak with anger of the inſolence and partiality of Page, and a ſhort time before his death revenged it by a ſatire *.

* Printed in this Volume.

It is natural to enquire in what terms Mr. Savage ſpoke of this fatal action, when the danger was over, and he was under no neceſſity of uſing any art to ſet his conduct in the faireſt light. He was not willing to dwell upon it; and if he tranſiently mentioned it, appeared neither to conſider himſelf as a murderer, nor as a man wholly free from the guilt of blood *. How much and how long he regretted it, appeared in a poem which he publiſhed many years afterwards. On occaſion of a copy of verſes, in which the failings of good men were recounted, and in which the author had endeavoured to illuſtrate his poſition, that "the beſt "may ſometimes deviate from virtue," by an inſtance of murder committed by Savage in the heat of wine, Savage remarked, that it was no very juſt repreſentation of a good man, to ſuppoſe him liable to drunkenneſs, and diſpoſed in his riots to cut throats.

He was now indeed at liberty, but was, as before, without any other ſupport than accidental favours and uncertain patronage afforded him; ſources by which he was ſometimes very liberally ſupplied, and which at other times were ſuddenly ſtopped; ſo that he ſpent his life

* In one of his letters he ſtiles it "a fatal quarrel, but too-well known."

between

between want and plenty; or, what was yet worſe, between beggary and extravagance; for as whatever he received was the gift of chance, which might as well favour him at one time as another, he was tempted to ſquander what he had, becauſe he always hoped to be immediately ſupplied.

Another cauſe of his profuſion was the abſurd kindneſs of his friends, who at once rewarded and enjoyed his abilities, by treating him at taverns, and habituated him to pleaſures which he could not afford to enjoy, and which he was not able to deny himſelf, though he purchaſed the luxury of a ſingle night by the anguiſh of cold and hunger for a week.

The experience of theſe inconveniences determined him to endeavour after ſome ſettled income, which, having long found ſubmiſſion and intreaties fruitleſs, he attempted to extort from his mother by rougher methods. He had now, as he acknowledged, loſt that tenderneſs for her, which the whole ſeries of her cruelty had not been able wholly to repreſs, till he found, by the efforts which ſhe made for his deſtruction, that ſhe was not content with refuſing to aſſiſt him, and being neutral in his ſtruggles with poverty, but was as ready to ſnatch every opportunity of adding to his misfortunes, and that ſhe was to be conſidered as an enemy implacably malicious, whom nothing but his blood could

could ſatisfy. He therefore threatened to harraſs her with lampoons, and to publiſh a copious narrative of her conduct, unleſs ſhe conſented to purchaſe an exemption from infamy, by allowing him a penſion.

This expedient proved ſucceſsful. Whether ſhame ſtill ſurvived, though virtue was extinct, or whether her relations had more delicacy than herſelf, and imagined that ſome of the darts which ſatire might point at her would glance upon them; Lord Tyrconnel, whatever were his motives, upon his promiſe to lay aſide his deſign of expoſing the cruelty of his mother, received him into his family, treated him as his equal, and engaged to allow him a penſion of two hundred pounds a year.

This was the golden part of Mr. Savage's life; and for ſome time he had no reaſon to complain of fortune; his appearance was ſplendid, his expences large, and his acquaintance extenſive. He was courted by all who endeavoured to be thought men of genius, and careſſed by all who valued themſelves upon a refined taſte. To admire Mr. Savage, was a proof of diſcernment, and to be acquainted with him, was a title to poetical reputation. His preſence was ſufficient to make any place of public entertainment popular; and his approbation and example conſtituted the faſhion. So powerful is genius, when it is inveſted with the glitter of affluence! Men willingly

willingly pay to fortune that regard which they owe to merit, and are pleaſed when they have an opportunity at once of gratifying their vanity, and practiſing their duty.

This interval of proſperity furniſhed him with opportunities of enlarging his knowledge of human nature, by contemplating life from its higheſt gradations to its loweſt; and, had he afterwards applied to dramatic poetry, he would perhaps not have had many ſuperiors; for as he never ſuffered any ſcene to paſs before his eyes without notice, he had treaſured in his mind all the different combinations of paſſions, and the innumerable mixtures of vice and virtue, which diſtinguiſh one character from another; and, as his conception was ſtrong, his expreſſions were clear, he eaſily received impreſſions from objects, and very forcibly tranſmitted them to others.

Of his exact obſervations on human life he has left a proof, which would do honour to the greateſt names, in a ſmall pamphlet, called, THE AUTHOR TO BE LET *, where he introduces Iſcariot Hackney, a proſtitute ſcribbler, giving an account of his birth, his education, his diſpoſition and morals, habits of life, and maxims of conduct. In the introduction are related many ſecret hiſtories of the petty writers of that

* Printed in his Works, vol. II. p. 231.

time,

time, but ſometimes mixed with ungenerous reflections on their birth, their circumſtances, or thoſe of their relations; nor can it be denied, that ſome paſſages are ſuch as Iſcariot Hackney might himſelf have produced.

He was accuſed likewiſe of living in an appearance of friendſhip with ſome whom he ſatiriſed, and of making uſe of the confidence which he gained by a ſeeming kindneſs to diſcover failings and expoſe them: it muſt be confeſſed, that Mr. Savage's eſteem was no very certain poſſeſſion, and that he would lampoon at one time thoſe whom he had praiſed at another.

It may be alleged, that the ſame man may change his principles, and that, he who was once deſervedly commended, may be afterwards ſatiriſed with equal juſtice, or that the poet was dazzled with the appearance of virtue, and found the man whom he had celebrated, when he had an opportunity of examining him more narrowly, unworthy of the panegyric which he had too haſtily beſtowed; and that as a falſe ſatire ought to be recanted, for the ſake of him whoſe reputation may be injured, falſe praiſe ought likewiſe to be obviated, leſt the diſtinction between vice and virtue ſhould be loſt, leſt a bad man ſhould be truſted upon the credit of his encomiaſt, or leſt others ſhould endeavour to obtain the like praiſes by the ſame means.

But

But though these excuses may be often plausible, and sometimes just, they are very seldom satisfactory to mankind; and the writer, who is not constant to his subject, quickly sinks into contempt, his satire loses its force, and his panegyric its value, and he is only considered at one time as a flatterer, and as a calumniator at another.

To avoid these imputations, it is only necessary to follow the rules of virtue, and to preserve an unvaried regard to truth. For though it is undoubtedly possible, that a man, however cautious, may be sometimes deceived by an artful appearance of virtue, or by false evidences of guilt, such errors will not be frequent; and it will be allowed, that the name of an author would never have been made contemptible, had no man ever said what he did not think, or misled others but when he was himself deceived.

If THE AUTHOR TO BE LET was first published in a single pamphlet, and afterwards inserted in a collection of pieces relating to the Dunciad, which were addressed by Mr. Savage to the Earl of Middlesex, in a * dedication which he was prevailed upon to sign, though he did not write it, and in which there are some positions, that the true author would per-

* See his Works, vol. II. p. 233.

haps

haps not have publiſhed under his own name, and on which Mr. Savage afterwards reflected with no great ſatisfaction; the enumeration of the bad effects of the uncontroled freedom of the preſs, and the aſſertion that the "liberties "taken by the writers of Journals with their "ſuperiors were exorbitant and unjuſtifiable," very ill became men, who have themſelves not always ſhewn the exacteſt regard to the laws of ſubordination in their writings, and who have often ſatisfied thoſe that at leaſt thought themſelves their ſuperiors, as they were eminent for their hereditary rank, and employed in the higheſt offices of the kingdom. But this is only an inſtance of that partiality which almoſt every man indulges with regard to himſelf; the liberty of the preſs is a bleſſing when we are inclined to write againſt others, and a calamity when we find ourſelves overborne by the multitude of our aſſailants; as the power of the crown is always thought too great by thoſe who ſuffer by its influence, and too little by thoſe in whoſe favour it is exerted; and a ſtanding army is generally accounted neceſſary by thoſe who command, and dangerous and oppreſſive by thoſe who ſupport it.

Mr. Savage was likewiſe very far from believing, that the letters annexed to each ſpecies of bad poets in the Bathos, were, as he was directed to aſſert, "ſet down at random;" for when

when he was charged by one of his friends with putting his name to ſuch an improbability, he had no other anſwer to make, than that "he "did not think of it," and his friend had too much tenderneſs to reply, that next to the crime of writing contrary to what he thought, was that of writing without thinking.

After having remarked what is falſe in this dedication, it is proper that I obſerve the impartiality which I recommend, by declaring what Savage aſſerted, that the account of the circumſtances which attended the publication of the Dunciad, however ſtrange and improbable, was exactly true.

The publication of this piece at this time raiſed Mr. Savage a great number of enemies among thoſe that were attacked by Mr. Pope, with whom he was conſidered as a kind of confederate, and whom he was ſuſpected of ſupplying with private intelligence and ſecret incidents: ſo that the ignominy of an informer was added to the terror of a ſatiriſt.

That he was not altogether free from literary hypocriſy, and that he ſometimes ſpoke one thing, and wrote another, cannot be denied; becauſe he himſelf confeſſed, that, when he lived in great familiarity with Dennis, he wrote an epigram * againſt him.

Mr.

* This epigram was, I believe, never publiſhed.

Should Dennis publiſh you had ſtabb'd your brother,
Lampoon'd your monarch, or debauch'd your mother;

Mr. Savage however ſet all the malice of all the pigmy writers at defiance, and thought the friendſhip of Mr. Pope cheaply purchaſed by being expoſed to their cenſure and their hatred; nor had he any reaſon to repent of the preference, for he found Mr. Pope a ſteady and unalienable friend almoſt to the end of his life.

About this time, notwithſtanding his avowed neutrality with regard to party, he publiſhed a panegyric on Sir Robert Walpole, for which he was rewarded by him with twenty guineas; a ſum not very large, if either the excellence of the performance, or the affluence of the patron, be conſidered; but greater than he afterwards obtained from a perſon of yet higher rank, and more deſirous in appearance of being diſtinguiſhed as a patron of literature.

As he was very far from approving the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole, and in converſation mentioned him ſometimes with acrimony, and generally with contempt; as he was one of thoſe who were always zealous in their aſſertions of the juſtice of the late oppoſition, jealous of the rights of the people, and alarmed by the long-continued triumph of the court;

Say, what revenge on Dennis can be had,
Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad?
On one ſo poor you cannot take the law,
On one ſo old your ſword you ſcorn to draw.
Uncag'd then, let the harmleſs monſter rage,
Secure in dulneſs, madneſs, want, and age.

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it was natural to ask him what could induce him to employ his poetry in praise of that man who was, in his opinion, an enemy to liberty, and an oppressor of his country? He alledged, that he was then dependent upon the Lord Tyrconnel, who was an implicit follower of the ministry, and that being enjoined by him, not without menaces, to write in praise of his leader, he had not resolution sufficient to sacrifice the pleasure of affluence to that of integrity.

On this, and on many other occasions, he was ready to lament the misery of living at the tables of other men, which was his fate from the beginning to the end of his life; for I know not whether he ever had, for three months together, a settled habitation, in which he could claim a right of residence.

To this unhappy state it is just to impute much of the inconstancy of his conduct; for though a readiness to comply with the inclination of others was no part of his natural character, yet he was sometimes obliged to relax his obstinacy, and submit his own judgment, and even his virtue, to the government of those by whom he was supported: so that, if his miseries were sometimes the consequences of his faults, he ought not yet to be wholly excluded from compassion, because his faults were very often the effects of his misfortunes.

In this gay period * of his life, while he was ſurrounded by affluence and pleaſure, he publiſhed THE WANDERER, a moral Poem, of which the deſign is compriſed in theſe lines:

I fly all public care, all venal ſtrife,
To try the ſtill, compar'd with active life;
To prove, by theſe the ſons of men may owe
The fruits of bliſs to burſting clouds of woe;
That ev'n calamity, by thought refin'd,
Inſpirits and adorns the thinking mind.

And more diſtinctly in the following paſſage:

By woe, the ſoul to daring action ſwells;
By woe, in plaintleſs patience it excels;
From patience, prudent clear experience ſprings,
And traces knowledge thro' the courſe of things!
Thence hope is form'd, thence fortitude, ſucceſs,
Renown:—whate'er men covet and careſs.

This performance was always conſidered by himſelf as his maſter-piece; and Mr. Pope, when he aſked his opinion of it, told him, that he read it once over, and was not diſpleaſed with it, that it gave him more pleaſure at the ſecond peruſal, and delighted him ſtill more at the third.

It has been generally objected to THE WANDERER, that the diſpoſition of the parts is irre-

* 1729.

gular;

gular; that the deſign is obſcure, and the plan perplexed; that the images, however beautiful, ſucceed each other without order; and that the whole performance is not ſo much a regular fabric, as a heap of ſhining materials thrown together by accident, which ſtrikes rather with the ſolemn magnificence of a ſtupendous ruin, than the elegant grandeur of a finiſhed pile.

This criticiſm is univerſal, and therefore it is reaſonable to believe it at leaſt in a great degree juſt; but Mr. Savage was always of a contrary opinion, and thought his drift could only be miſſed by negligence or ſtupidity, and that the whole plan was regular, and the parts diſtinct.

It was never denied to abound with ſtrong repreſentations of nature, and juſt obſervations upon life; and it may eaſily be obſerved, that moſt of his pictures have an evident tendency to illuſtrate his firſt great poſition, "that good is "the conſequence of evil." The ſun that burns up the mountains, fructifies the vales; the deluge that ruſhes down the broken rocks with dreadful impetuoſity, is ſeparated into purling brooks; and the rage of the hurricane purifies the air.

Even in this poem he has not been able to forbear one touch upon the cruelty of his mother, which, though remarkably delicate

and tender, is a proof how deep an impreſſion it had upon his mind.

This muſt be at leaſt acknowledged, which ought to be thought equivalent to many other excellencies, that this poem can promote no other purpoſes than thoſe of virtue, and that it is written with a very ſtrong ſenſe of the efficacy of religion.

But my province is rather to give the hiſtory of Mr. Savage's performances, than to diſplay their beauties, or to obviate the criticiſms which they have occaſioned; and therefore I ſhall not dwell upon the particular paſſages which deſerve applauſe: I ſhall neither ſhow the excellence of his deſcriptions, nor expatiate on the terrific portrait of ſuicide, nor point out the artful touches, by which he has diſtinguiſhed the intellectual features of the rebels, who ſuffer death in his laſt canto. It is, however, proper to obſerve, that Mr. Savage always declared the characters wholly fictitious, and without the leaſt alluſion to any real perſons or actions.

From a poem ſo diligently laboured, and ſo ſucceſsfully finiſhed, it might be reaſonably expected that he ſhould have gained conſiderable advantage; nor can it, without ſome degree of indignation and concern, be told, that he ſold the copy for ten guineas, of which he afterwards returned

returned two, that the two laſt ſheets of the work might be reprinted, of which he had in his abſence intruſted the correction to a friend, who was too indolent to perform it with accuracy.

A ſuperſtitious regard to the correction of his ſheets was one of Mr. Savage's peculiarities: he often altered, reviſed, recurred to his firſt reading or punctuation, and again adopted the alteration; he was dubious and irreſolute without end, as on a queſtion of the laſt importance, and at laſt was ſeldom ſatisfied: the intruſion or omiſſion of a comma was ſufficient to diſcompoſe him, and he would lament an error of a ſingle letter as a heavy calamity. In one of his letters relating to an impreſſion of ſome verſes, he remarks, that he had, with regard to the correction of the proof, "a ſpell upon him;" and indeed the anxiety, with which he dwelt upon the minuteſt and moſt trifling niceties, deſerved no other name than that of faſcination.

That he ſold ſo valuable a performance for ſo ſmall a price was not to be imputed either to neceſſity, by which the learned and ingenious are often obliged to ſubmit to very hard conditions; or to avarice, by which the bookſellers are frequently incited to oppreſs that genius by which they are ſupported; but to that intemperate deſire of pleaſure, and habitual ſlavery to

his paſſions, which involved him in many perplexities; he happened at that time to be engaged in the purſuit of ſome trifling gratification, and, being without money for the preſent occaſion, ſold his poem to the firſt bidder, and perhaps for the firſt price that was propoſed, and would probably have been content with leſs, if leſs had been offered him.

This poem was addreſſed to the Lord Tyrconnel, not only in the firſt lines, but in a formal dedication filled with the higheſt ſtrains of panegyric, and the warmeſt profeſſions of gratitude, but by no means remarkable for delicacy of connection or elegance of ſtile.

Theſe praiſes in a ſhort time he found himſelf inclined to retract, being diſcarded by the man on whom he had beſtowed them, and whom he then immediately diſcovered not to have deſerved them. Of this quarrel, which every day made more bitter, Lord Tyrconnel and Mr. Savage aſſigned very different reaſons, which might perhaps all in reality concur, though they were not all convenient to be alledged by either party. Lord Tyrconnel affirmed, that it was the conſtant practice of Mr. Savage to enter a tavern with any company that propoſed it, drink the moſt expenſive wines with great profuſion, and when the reckoning was demanded, to be without money: If, as it often happened, his company were willing

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to defray his part, the affair ended, without any ill conſequences; but, if they were refractory, and expected that the wine ſhould be paid for by him that drank it, his method of compoſition was, to take them with him to his own apartment, aſſume the government of the houſe, and order the butler in an imperious manner to ſet the beſt wine in the cellar before his company, who often drank till they forgot the reſpect due to the houſe in which they were entertained, indulged themſelves in the utmoſt extravagance of merriment, practiſed the moſt licentious frolicks, and committed all the outrages of drunkenneſs.

Nor was this the only charge which Lord Tyrconnel brought againſt him: Having given him a collection of valuable books, ſtamped with his own arms, he had the mortification to ſee them in a ſhort time expoſed to ſale upon the ſtalls, it being uſual with Mr. Savage, when he wanted a ſmall ſum, to take his books to the pawnbroker.

Whoever was acquainted with Mr. Savage eaſily credited both theſe accuſations: for, having been obliged from his firſt entrance into the world to ſubſiſt upon expedients, affluence was not able to exalt him above them; and ſo much was he delighted with wine and converſation, and ſo long had he been accuſtomed to live by chance, that he would at any time go to the tavern without ſcruple, and truſt for his reckoning

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ing to the liberality of his company, and frequently of company to whom he was very little known. This conduct indeed very ſeldom drew upon him thoſe inconveniences that might be feared by any other perſon; for his converſation was ſo entertaining, and his addreſs ſo pleaſing, that few thought the pleaſure which they received from him dearly purchaſed, by paying for his wine. It was his peculiar happineſs, that he ſcarcely ever found a ſtranger, whom he did not leave a friend; but it muſt likewiſe be added, that he had not often a friend long, without obliging him to become a ſtranger.

Mr. Savage, on the other hand, declared, that Lord Tyrconnel * quarrelled with him, becauſe he would ſubſtract from his own luxury and extravagance what he had promiſed to allow him, and that his reſentment was only a plea for the violation of his promiſe: He aſſerted, that he had done nothing that ought to exclude him from that ſubſiſtence which he thought not ſo much a favour, as a debt, ſince it was offered him upon conditions, which he had never broken; and that his only fault was, that he could not be ſupported with nothing.

He acknowledged, that Lord Tyrconnel often exhorted him to regulate his method of life,

* His expreſſion in one of his letters was, "that L. T——l "had involved his eſtate, and therefore poorly ſought an occa- "ſion to quarrel with him."

and

and not to ſpend all his nights in taverns; and that he appeared very deſirous, that he would paſs thoſe hours with him, which he ſo freely beſtowed upon others. This demand Mr. Savage conſidered as a cenſure of his conduct, which he could never patiently bear; and which, in the latter and cooler part of his life, was ſo offenſive to him, that he declared it as his reſolution, "to ſpurn that friend who ſhould preſume to "dictate to him;" and it is not likely, that in his earlier years he received admonitions with more calmneſs.

He was likewiſe inclined to reſent ſuch expectations, as tending to infringe his liberty, of which he was very jealous, when it was neceſſary to the gratification of his paſſions; and declared, that the requeſt was ſtill more unreaſonable, as the company to which he was to have been confined was inſupportably diſagreeable. This aſſertion affords another inſtance of that inconſiſtency of his writings with his converſation, which was ſo often to be obſerved. He forgot how laviſhly he had, in his Dedication to THE WANDERER, extolled the delicacy and penetration, the humanity and generoſity, the candour and politeneſs, of the man, whom, when he no longer loved him, he declared to be a wretch without underſtanding, without good-nature, and without juſtice; of whoſe name he thought himſelf

himſelf obliged to leave no trace in any future edition of his writings; and accordingly blotted it out of that copy of THE WANDERER which was in his hands.

During his continuance with the Lord Tyrconnel, he wrote THE TRIUMPH OF HEALTH AND MIRTH, on the recovery of Lady Tyrconnel from a languiſhing illneſs. This performance is remarkable, not only for the gaiety of the ideas, and the melody of the numbers, but for the agreeable fiction upon which it is formed. Mirth, overwhelmed with ſorrow for the ſickneſs of her favourite, takes a flight in queſt of her ſiſter Health, whom ſhe finds reclined upon the brow of a lofty mountain, amidſt the fragrance of perpetual ſpring, with the breezes of the morning ſporting about her. Being ſolicited by her ſiſter Mirth, ſhe readily promiſes her aſſiſtance, flies away in a cloud, and impregnates the waters of Bath with new virtues, by which the ſickneſs of Belinda is relieved.

As the reputation of his abilities, the particular circumſtances of his birth and life, the ſplendour of his appearance, and the diſtinction which was for ſome time paid him by Lord Tyrconnel, intitled him to familiarity with perſons of higher rank, than thoſe to whoſe converſation he had been before admitted, he did

did not fail to gratify that curiosity, which induced him to take a nearer view of those whom their birth, their employments, or their fortunes, necessarily place at a distance from the greatest part of mankind, and to examine whether their merit was magnified or diminished by the medium through which it was contemplated; whether the splendour with which they dazzled their admirers was inherent in themselves, or only reflected on them by the objects that surrounded them; and whether great men were selected for high stations, or high stations made great men.

For this purpose he took all opportunities of conversing familiarly with those who were most conspicuous at that time for their power or their influence; he watched their looser moments, and examined their domestic behaviour with that acuteness which nature had given him, and which the uncommon variety of his life had contributed to increase, and that inquisitiveness which must always be produced in a vigorous mind, by an absolute freedom from all pressing or domestic engagements. His discernment was quick, and therefore he soon found in every person, and in every affair, something that deserved attention; he was supported by others, without any care for himself, and was therefore at leisure to pursue his observations.

More circumſtances to conſtitute a critic on human life could not eaſily concur; nor indeed could any man, who aſſumed from accidental advantages more praiſe than he could juſtly claim from his real merit, admit an acquaintance more dangerous than that of Savage; of whom likewiſe it muſt be confeſſed, that abilities really exalted above the common level, or virtue refined from paſſion, or proof againſt corruption, could not eaſily find an abler judge, or a warmer advocate.

What was the reſult of Mr. Savage's enquiry, though he was not much accuſtomed to conceal his diſcoveries, it may not be entirely ſafe to relate, becauſe the perſons whoſe characters he criticiſed are powerful; and power and reſentment are ſeldom ſtrangers; nor would it perhaps be wholly juſt, becauſe what he aſſerted in converſation might, though true in general, be heightened by ſome momentary ardour of imagination, and, as it can be delivered only from memory, may be imperfectly repreſented; ſo that the picture at firſt aggravated, and then unſkilfully copied, may be juſtly ſuſpected to retain no great reſemblance of the original.

It may however be obſerved, that he did not appear to have formed very elevated ideas of thoſe to whom the adminiſtration of affairs, or the conduct of parties, has been intruſted; who have been conſidered as the advocates of the

crown, or the guardians of the people; and who have obtained the moſt implicit confidence, and the loudeſt applauſes. Of one particular perſon, who has been at one time ſo popular as to be generally eſteemed, and at another ſo formidable as to be univerſally deteſted, he obſerved, that his acquiſitions had been ſmall, or that his capacity was narrow, and that the whole range of his mind was from obſcenity to politics, and from politics to obſcenity.

But the opportunity of indulging his ſpeculations on great characters was now at an end. He was baniſhed from the table of Lord Tyrconnel, and turned again adrift upon the world, without proſpect of finding quickly any other harbour. As prudence was not one of the virtues by which he was diſtinguiſhed, he had made no proviſion againſt a misfortune like this. And though it is not to be imagined, but that the ſeparation muſt for ſome time have been preceded by coldneſs, peeviſhneſs, or neglect, though it was undoubtedly the conſequence of accumulated provocations on both ſides; yet every one that knew Savage will readily believe, that to him it was ſudden as a ſtroke of thunder; that, though he might have tranſiently ſuſpected it, he had never ſuffered any thought ſo ungleaſing to ſink into his mind, but that he had driven it away by amuſements, or dreams of future felicity and affluence, and had never taken

any

any meaſures by which he might prevent a precipitation from plenty to indigence.

This quarrel and ſeparation, and the difficulties to which Mr. Savage was expoſed by them, were ſoon known both to his friends and enemies; nor was it long before he perceived, from the behaviour of both, how much is added to the luſtre of genius by the ornaments of wealth.

His condition did not appear to excite much compaſſion; for he had not always been careful to uſe the advantages he enjoyed with that moderation which ought to have been with more than uſual caution preſerved by him, who knew, if he had reflected, that he was only a dependant on the bounty of another, whom he could expect to ſupport him no longer than he endeavoured to preſerve his favour by complying with his inclinations, and whom he nevertheleſs ſet at defiance, and was continually irritating by negligence or encroachments.

Examples need not be ſought at any great diſtance to prove, that ſuperiority of fortune has a natural tendency to kindle pride, and that pride ſeldom fails to exert itſelf in contempt and inſult; and if this is often the effect of hereditary wealth, and of honours enjoyed only by the merit of others, it is ſome extenuation of any indecent triumphs to which this unhappy man may have been betrayed, that his proſperity was

was heightened by the force of novelty, and made more intoxicating by a ſenſe of the miſery in which he had ſo long languiſhed, and perhaps of the inſults which he had formerly borne, and which he might now think himſelf entitled to revenge. It is too common for thoſe who have unjuſtly ſuffered pain, to inflict it likewiſe in their turn with the ſame injuſtice, and to imagine that they have a right to treat others as they have themſelves been treated.

That Mr. Savage was too much elevated by any good fortune, is generally known; and ſome paſſages of his Introduction to THE AUTHOR TO BE LET ſufficiently ſhew, that he did not wholly refrain from ſuch ſatire as he afterwards thought very unjuſt, when he was expoſed to it himſelf; for, when he was afterwards ridiculed in the character of a diſtreſſed poet, he very eaſily diſcovered, that diſtreſs was not a proper ſubject for merriment, or topic of invective. He was then able to diſcern, that, if miſery be the effect of virtue, it ought to be reverenced; if of ill-fortune, to be pitied; and if of vice, not to be inſulted, becauſe it is perhaps itſelf a puniſhment adequate to the crime by which it was produced. And the humanity of that man can deſerve no panegyric, who is capable of reproaching a criminal in the hands of the executioner.

But theſe reflections, though they readily occurred to him in the firſt and laſt parts of his life,

were, I am afraid, for a long time forgotten; at leaſt they were, like many other maxims, treaſured up in his mind, rather for ſhew than uſe, and operated very little upon his conduct, however elegantly he might ſometimes explain, or however forcibly he might inculcate, them.

His degradation therefore from the condition which he had enjoyed with ſuch wanton thoughtleſſneſs, was conſidered by many as an occaſion of triumph. Thoſe who had before paid their court to him without ſucceſs, ſoon returned the contempt which they had ſuffered; and they who had received favours from him, for of ſuch favours as he could beſtow he was very liberal, did not always remember them. So much more certain are the effects of reſentment than of gratitude: it is not only to many more pleaſing to recollect thoſe faults which place others below them, than thoſe virtues by which they are themſelves comparatively depreſſed; but it is likewiſe more eaſy to neglect, than to recompenſe; and though there are few who will practiſe a laborious virtue, there will never be wanting multitudes that will indulge an eaſy vice.

Savage however was very little diſturbed at the marks of contempt which his ill-fortune brought upon him, from thoſe whom he never eſteemed, and with whom he never conſidered himſelf as leveled by any calamities; and though it was not without ſome uneaſineſs that he ſaw ſome, whoſe

whoſe friendſhip he valued, change their behaviour; he yet obſerved their coldneſs without much emotion, conſidered them as the ſlaves of fortune and the worſhipers of proſperity, and was more inclined to deſpiſe them, than to lament himſelf.

It does not appear, that, after this return of his wants, he found mankind equally favourable to him, as at his firſt appearance in the world. His ſtory, though in reality not leſs melancholy, was leſs affecting, becauſe it was no longer new; it therefore procured him no new friends; and thoſe that had formerly relieved him thought they might now conſign him to others. He was now likewiſe conſidered by many rather as criminal, than as unhappy; for the friends of Lord Tyrconnel, and of his mother, were ſufficiently induſtrious to publiſh his weakneſſes, which were indeed very numerous; and nothing was forgotten, that might make him either hateful or ridiculous.

It cannot but be imagined, that ſuch repreſentations of his faults muſt make great numbers leſs ſenſible of his diſtreſs; many, who had only an opportunity to hear one part, made no ſcruple to propagate the account which they received; many aſſiſted their circulation from malice or revenge; and perhaps many pretended to credit them, that they might with a better

grace withdraw their regard, or withhold their aſſiſtance.

Savage however was not one of thoſe, who ſuffered himſelf to be injured without reſiſtance, nor was leſs diligent in expoſing the faults of Lord Tyrconnel, over whom he obtained at leaſt this advantage, that he drove him firſt to the practice of outrage and violence; for he was ſo much provoked by the wit and virulence of Savage, that he came with a number of attendants, that did no honour to his courage, to beat him at a coffee-houſe. But it happened that he had left the place a few minutes, and his lordſhip had, without danger, the pleaſure of boaſting how he would have treated him. Mr. Savage went next day to repay his viſit at his own houſe; but was prevailed on, by his domeſtics, to retire without inſiſting upon ſeeing him.

Lord Tyrconnel was accuſed by Mr. Savage of ſome actions, which ſcarcely any provocations will be thought ſufficient to juſtify; ſuch as ſeizing what he had in his lodgings, and other inſtances of wanton cruelty, by which he increaſed the diſtreſs of Savage, without any advantage to himſelf.

Theſe mutual accuſations were retorted on both ſides, for many years, with the utmoſt degree of virulence and rage; and time ſeemed rather to augment than diminiſh their reſentment.

ment. That the anger of Mr. Savage ſhould be kept alive is not ſtrange, becauſe he felt every day the conſequences of the quarrel; but it might reaſonably have been hoped, that Lord Tyrconnel might have relented, and at length have forgot thoſe provocations, which, however they might have once inflamed him, had not in reality much hurt him.

The ſpirit of Mr. Savage indeed never ſuffered him to ſolicit a reconciliation; he returned reproach for reproach, and inſult for inſult; his ſuperiority of wit ſupplied the diſadvantages of his fortune, and enabled him to form a party, and prejudice great numbers in his favour.

But though this might be ſome gratification of his vanity, it afforded very little relief to his neceſſities; and he was very frequently reduced to uncommon hardſhips, of which, however, he never made any mean or importunate complaints, being formed rather to bear miſery with fortitude, than enjoy proſperity with moderation.

He now thought himſelf again at liberty to expoſe the cruelty of his mother, and therefore, I believe, about this time, publiſhed THE BASTARD, a poem remarkable for the vivacious ſallies of thought in the beginning *, where he makes a pompous enumeration of the imaginary

* Reprinted in this volume.

advantages of baſe birth; and the pathetic ſentiments at the end, where he recounts the real calamities which he ſuffered by the crime of his parents.

The vigour and ſpirit of the verſes, the peculiar circumſtances of the author, the novelty of the ſubject, and the notoriety of the ſtory to which the alluſions are made, procured this performance a very favourable reception; great numbers were immediately diſperſed, and editions were multiplied with unuſual rapidity.

One circumſtance attended the publication, which Savage uſed to relate with great ſatisfaction. His mother, to whom the poem was with "due reverence" inſcribed, happened then to be at Bath, where ſhe could not conveniently retire from cenſure, or conceal herſelf from obſervation; and no ſooner did the reputation of the poem begin to ſpread, than ſhe heard it repeated in all places of concourſe, nor could ſhe enter the aſſembly-rooms, or croſs the walks, without being ſaluted with ſome lines from THE BASTARD.

This was perhaps the firſt time that ever ſhe diſcovered a ſenſe of ſhame, and on this occaſion the power of wit was very conſpicuous; the wretch who had, without ſcruple, proclaimed herſelf an adultereſs, and who had firſt endeavoured to ſtarve her ſon, then to tranſport him, and afterwards to hang him, was not able to bear

bear the repreſentation of her own conduct; but fled from reproach, though ſhe felt no pain from guilt, and left Bath with the utmoſt haſte, to ſhelter herſelf among the crowds of London.

Thus Savage had the ſatisfaction of finding, that, though he could not reform his mother, he could puniſh her, and that he did not always ſuffer alone.

The pleaſure which he received from this increaſe of his poetical reputation, was ſufficient for ſome time to overbalance the miſeries of want, which this performance did not much alleviate; for it was ſold for a very trivial ſum to a bookſeller, who, though the ſucceſs was ſo uncommon that five impreſſions were ſold, of which many were undoubtedly very numerous, had not generoſity ſufficient to admit the unhappy writer to any part of the profit.

The ſale of this poem was always mentioned by Savage with the utmoſt elevation of heart, and referred to by him as an inconteſtable proof of a general acknowledgment of his abilities. It was indeed the only production of which he could juſtly boaſt a general reception.

But though he did not loſe the opportunity which ſucceſs gave him, of ſetting a high rate on his abilities, but paid due deference to the ſuffrages of mankind when they were given in his favour, he did not ſuffer his eſteem of himſelf to depend upon others, nor found any thing ſacred

in the voice of the people when they were inclined to cenſure him; he then readily ſhewed the folly of expecting that the public ſhould judge right, obſerved how ſlowly poetical merit had often forced its way into the world; he contented himſelf with the applauſe of men of judgement, and was ſomewhat diſpoſed to exclude all thoſe from the character of men of judgement who did not applaud him.

But he was at other times more favourable to mankind than to think them blind to the beauties of his works, and imputed the ſlowneſs of their ſale to other cauſes; either they were publiſhed at a time when the town was empty, or when the attention of the public was engroſſed by ſome ſtruggle in the parliament, or ſome other object of general concern; or they were by the neglect of the publiſher not diligently diſperſed, or by his avarice not advertiſed with ſufficient frequency. Addreſs, or induſtry, or liberality, was always wanting; and the blame was laid rather on any perſon than the author.

By arts like theſe, arts which every man practiſes in ſome degree, and to which too much of the little tranquillity of life is to be aſcribed, Savage was always able to live at peace with himſelf. Had he indeed only made uſe of theſe expedients to alleviate the loſs or want of fortune or reputation, or any other advantages, which it is not in man's power to beſtow upon him-

himſelf, they might have been juſtly mentioned as inſtances of a philoſophical mind, and very properly propoſed to the imitation of multitudes, who, for want of diverting their imaginations with the ſame dexterity, languiſh under afflictions which might be eaſily removed.

It were doubtleſs to be wiſhed, that truth and reaſon were univerſally prevalent; that every thing were eſteemed according to its real value; and that men would ſecure themſelves from being diſappointed in their endeavours after happineſs, by placing it only in virtue, which is always to be obtained; but if adventitious and foreign pleaſures muſt be purſued, it would be perhaps of ſome benefit, ſince that purſuit muſt frequently be fruitleſs, if the practice of Savage could be taught, that folly might be an antidote to folly, and one fallacy be obviated by another.

But the danger of this pleaſing intoxication muſt not be concealed; nor indeed can any one, after having obſerved the life of Savage, need to be cautioned againſt it. By imputing none of his miſeries to himſelf, he continued to act upon the ſame principles, and to follow the ſame path; was never made wiſer by his ſufferings, nor preſerved by one misfortune from falling into another. He proceeded throughout his life to tread the ſame ſteps on the ſame circle; always applauding his paſt conduct, or at leaſt

leaſt forgetting it, to amuſe himſelf with phantoms of happineſs, which were dancing before him; and willingly turned his eyes from the light of reaſon, when it would have diſcovered the illuſion, and ſhewn him, what he never wiſhed to ſee, his real ſtate.

He is even accuſed, after having lulled his imagination with thoſe ideal opiates, of having tried the ſame experiment upon his conſcience; and, having accuſtomed himſelf to impute all deviations from the right to foreign cauſes, it is certain that he was upon every occaſion too eaſily reconciled to himſelf, and that he appeared very little to regret thoſe practices which had impaired his reputation. The reigning error of his life was, that he miſtook the love for the practice of virtue, and was indeed not ſo much a good man, as the friend of goodneſs.

This at leaſt muſt be allowed him, that he always preſerved a ſtrong ſenſe of the dignity, the beauty, and the neceſſity, of virtue, and that he never contributed deliberately to ſpread corruption amongſt mankind; his actions, which were generally precipitate, were often blameable; but his writings, being the productions of ſtudy, uniformly tended to the exaltation of the mind, and the propagation of morality and piety.

Theſe

Theſe writings may improve mankind, when his failings ſhall be forgotten; and therefore he muſt be conſidered, upon the whole, as a benefactor to the world; nor can his perſonal example do any hurt, ſince, whoever hears of his faults, will hear of the miſeries which they brought upon him, and which would deſerve leſs pity, had not his condition been ſuch as made his falts pardonable. He may be conſidered as a child expoſed to all the temptations of indigence, at an age when reſolution was not yet ſtrengthened by conviction, nor virtue confirmed by habit; a circumſtance which in his BASTARD he laments in a very affecting manner:

—— No Mother's care
Shielded my infant innocence with prayer:
No Father's guardian-hand my youth maintain'd,
Call'd forth my virtues, or from vice reſtrain'd.

THE BASTARD, however it might provoke or mortify his mother, could not be expected to melt her to compaſſion, ſo that he was ſtill under the ſame want of the neceſſities of life; and he therefore exerted all the intereſt which his wit, or his birth, or his misfortunes, could procure, to obtain, upon the death of Euſden, the place of Poet Laureat, and proſecuted his application with ſo much diligence, that the King publickly

lickly declared it his intention to beſtow it upon him; but ſuch was the fate of Savage, that even the King, when he intended his advantage, was diſappointed in his ſchemes; for the Lord Chamberlain, who has the diſpoſal of the laurel, as one of the appendages of his office, either did not know the King's deſign, or did not approve it, or thought the nomination of the Laureat an encroachment upon his rights, and therefore beſtowed the laurel upon Colly Cibber.

Mr. Savage, thus diſappointed, took a reſolution of applying to the Queen, that, having once given him life, ſhe would enable him to ſupport it, and therefore publiſhed a ſhort poem on her birth-day, to which he gave the odd title of VOLUNTEER LAUREAT. The event of this eſſay he has himſelf related in the following letter, which he prefixed to the poem, when he afterwards reprinted it in THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, from whence I have copied it intire, as this was one of the few attempts in which Mr. Savage ſucceeded.

"Mr. URBAN,

"In your Magazine for February you pub-
"liſhed the laſt VOLUNTEER LAUREAT, written
"on

"on a very melancholy occaſion, the death of "the royal patroneſs of arts and literature in "general, and of the author of that poem in "particular: I now ſend you the firſt that Mr. "Savage wrote under that title.—This gentle-"man, notwithſtanding a very conſiderable "intereſt, being, on the death of Mr. Euſden, "diſappointed of the Laureat's place, wrote "the before-mentioned poem; which was "no ſooner publiſhed, but the late Queen ſent "to a bookſeller for it: the author had not "at that time a friend either to get him intro-"duced, or his poem preſented at court; yet "ſuch was the unſpeakable goodneſs of that "Princeſs, that, notwithſtanding this act of "ceremony was wanting, in a few days after "publication, Mr. Savage received a Bank-bill "of fifty pounds, and a gracious meſſage from "her Majeſty, by the Lord North and Guil-"ford, to this effect; "That her Majeſty was "highly pleaſed with the verſes; that ſhe took "particularly kind his lines there relating to "the King; that he had permiſſion to write "annually on the ſame ſubject; and that he "ſhould yearly receive the like preſent, till "ſomething better (which was her Majeſty's "intention) could be done for him." After "this, he was permitted to preſent one of his

"annual

"annual poems to her Majeſty, had the honour "of kiſſing her hand, and met with the moſt "gracious reception. Your's, &c."

Such was the performance, and ſuch its reception; a reception which, though by no means unkind, was yet not in the higheſt degree generous: to chain down the genius of a writer to an annual panegyric, ſhewed in the Queen too much deſire of hearing her own praiſes, and a greater regard to herſelf than to him on whom her bounty was conferred. It was a kind of avaricious generoſity, by which flattery was rather purchaſed than genius rewarded.

Mrs. Oldfield had formerly given him the ſame allowance with much more heroic intention; ſhe had no other view than to enable him to proſecute his ſtudies, and to ſet himſelf above the want of aſſiſtance, and was contented with doing good without ſtipulating for encomiums.

Mr. Savage however was not at liberty to make exceptions, but was raviſhed with the favours which he had received, and probably yet more with thoſe which he was promiſed; he conſidered himſelf now as a favourite of the Queen, and did not doubt but a few annual poems would eſtabliſh him in ſome profitable employment.

He

He therefore aſſumed the title of VOLUNTEER LAUREAT, not without ſome reprehenſions from Cibber, who informed him, that the title of LAUREAT was a mark of honour conferred by the King, from whom all honour is derived, and which therefore no man has a right to beſtow upon himſelf; and added, that he might, with equal propriety, ſtile himſelf a Volunteer Lord, or Volunteer Baronet. It cannot be denied that the remark was juſt; but Savage did not think any title, which was conferred upon Mr. Cibber, ſo honourable as that the uſurpation of it could be imputed to him as an inſtance of very exorbitant vanity, and therefore continued to write under the ſame title, and received every year the ſame reward.

He did not appear to conſider theſe encomiums as teſts of his abilities, or as any thing more than annual hints to the Queen of her promiſe, or acts of ceremony, by the performance of which he was intitled to his penſion, and therefore did not labour them with great diligence, or print more than fifty each year, except that for ſome of the laſt years he regularly inſerted them in THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, by which they were diſperſed over the kingdom.

Of ſome of them he had himſelf ſo low an opinion, that he intended to omit them in the collection of poems, for which he printed propoſals,

ſals, and ſolicited ſubſcriptions; nor can it ſeem ſtrange, that, being confined to the ſame ſubject, he ſhould be at ſome times indolent, and at others unſucceſsful; that he ſhould ſometimes delay a diſagreeable taſk, till it was too late to perform it well; or that he ſhould ſometimes repeat the ſame ſentiment on the ſame occaſion, or at others be miſled by an attempt after novelty to forced conceptions and far-fetched images.

He wrote indeed with a double intention, which ſupplied him with ſome variety; for his buſineſs was to praiſe the Queen for the favours which he had received, and to complain to her of the delay of thoſe which ſhe had promiſed: in ſome of his pieces, therefore, gratitude is predominant, and in ſome diſcontent; in ſome he repreſents himſelf as happy in her patronage, and in others as diſconſolate to find himſelf neglected.

Her promiſe, like other promiſes made to this unfortunate man, was never performed, though he took ſufficient care that it ſhould not be forgotten. The publication of his VOLUNTEER LAUREAT procured him no other reward than a regular remittance of fifty pounds.

He was not ſo depreſſed by his diſappointments as to neglect any opportunity that was offered of advancing his intereſt. When the Princeſs

Princeſs Anne was married, he wrote a poem * upon her departure, only, as he declared, "be-"cauſe it was expected from him," and he was not willing to bar his own proſpects by any appearance of neglect.

He never mentioned any advantage gained by this poem, or any regard that was paid to it; and therefore it is likely that it was conſidered at court as an act of duty to which he was obliged by his dependence, and which it was therefore not neceſſary to reward by any new favour: or perhaps the Queen really intended his advancement, and therefore thought it ſuperfluous to laviſh preſents upon a man whom ſhe intended to eſtabliſh for life.

About this time not only his hopes were in danger of being fruſtrated, but his penſion likewiſe of being obſtructed, by an accidental calumny. The writer of THE DAILY COURANT, a paper then publiſhed under the direction of the miniſtry, charged him with a crime, which, though not very great in itſelf, would have been remarkably invidious in him, and might very juſtly have incenſed the Queen againſt him. He was accuſed by name of influencing elections againſt the court, by appearing at the head of a tory mob; nor did the accuſer fail to aggravate his crime, by repreſenting it as the effect of the moſt atrocious ingratitude, and a kind of re-

* Printed in this volume.

bellion againſt the Queen, who had firſt preſerved him from an infamous death, and afterwards diſtinguiſhed him by her favour, and ſupported him by her charity. The charge, as it was open and confident, was likewiſe by good fortune very particular. The place of the tranſaction was mentioned, and the whole ſeries of the rioter's conduct related. This exactneſs made Mr. Savage's vindication eaſy; for he never had in his life ſeen the place which was declared to be the ſcene of his wickedneſs, nor ever had been preſent in any town when its repreſentatives were choſen. This anſwer he therefore made haſte to publiſh, with all the circumſtances neceſſary to make it credible; and very reaſonably demanded, that the accuſation ſhould be retracted in the ſame paper, that he might no longer ſuffer the imputation of ſedition and ingratitude. This demand was likewiſe preſſed by him in a private letter to the author of the paper, who either truſting to the protection of thoſe whoſe defence he had undertaken, or having entertained ſome perſonal malice againſt Mr. Savage, or fearing, leſt, by retracting ſo confident an aſſertion, he ſhould impair the credit of his paper, refuſed to give him that ſatisfaction.

Mr. Savage therefore thought it neceſſary, to his own vindication, to proſecute him in the King's Bench; but as he did not find any ill

effects from the accuſation, having ſufficiently cleared his innocence, he thought any farther procedure would have the appearance of revenge, and therefore willingly dropped it.

He ſaw ſoon afterwards a proceſs commenced in the ſame court againſt himſelf, on an information in which he was accuſed of writing and publiſhing an obſcene pamphlet.

It was always Mr. Savage's deſire to be diſtinguiſhed; and, when any controverſy became popular, he never wanted ſome reaſon for engaging in it with great ardour, and appearing at the head of the party which he had choſen. As he was never celebrated for his prudence, he had no ſooner taken his ſide, and informed himſelf of the chief topicks of the diſpute, than he took all opportunities of aſſerting and propagating his principles, without much regard to his own intereſt, or any other viſible deſign than that of drawing upon himſelf the attention of mankind.

The diſpute between the Biſhop of London and the Chancellor is well known to have been for ſome time the chief topic of political converſation; and therefore Mr. Savage, in purſuance of his character, endeavoured to become conſpicuous among the controvertiſts with which every coffee-houſe was filled on that occaſion. He was an indefatigable oppoſer of all the claims of eccleſiaſtical power, though he did not know on

what they were founded; and was therefore no friend to the Biſhop of London. But he had another reaſon for appearing as a warm advocate for Dr. Rundle; for he was the friend of Mr. Foſter and Mr. Thomſon, who were the friends of Mr. Savage.

Thus remote was his intereſt in the queſtion, which however, as he imagined, concerned him ſo nearly, that it was not ſufficient to harangue and diſpute, but neceſſary likewiſe to write upon it.

He therefore engaged with great ardour in a new Poem, called by him, THE PROGRESS OF A DIVINE; in which he conducts a profligate prieſt by all the gradations of wickedneſs from a poor curacy in the country, to the higheſt preferments of the church, and deſcribes with that humour which was natural to him, and that knowledge which was extended to all the diverſities of human life, his behaviour in every ſtation; and inſinuates, that this prieſt, thus accompliſhed, found at laſt a patron in the Biſhop of London.

When he was aſked by one of his friends, on what pretence he could charge the Biſhop with ſuch an action, he had no more to ſay, than that he had only inverted the accuſation, and that he thought it reaſonable to believe, that he, who obſtructed the riſe of a good man without

without reaſon, would for bad reaſons promote the exaltation of a villain.

The clergy were univerſally provoked by this ſatire; and Savage, who, as was his conſtant practice, had ſet his name to his performance, was cenſured in THE WEEKLY MISCELLANY * with

* A ſhort ſatire was likewiſe publiſhed in the ſame paper, in which were the following lines:

For cruel murder doom'd to hempen death,
Savage, by royal grace, prolong'd his breath.
Well might you think he ſpent his future years
In prayer, and faſting, and repentant tears.
—But, O vain hope!—the truly Savage cries,
" Prieſts, and their ſlaviſh doctrines, I deſpiſe.
" Shall I ———
" Who, by free-thinking to free action fir'd,
" In midnight brawls a deathleſs name acquir'd,
" Now ſtoop to learn of eccleſiaſtic men?—
" —No, arm'd with rhyme, at prieſts I'll take my aim,
" Though prudence bids me murder but their fame"

WEEKLY MISCELLANY.

An anſwer was publiſhed in THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, written by an unknown hand, from which the following lines are ſelected:

Transform'd by thoughtleſs rage, and midnight wine,
From malice free, and puſh'd without deſign;
In equal brawl if Savage lung'd a thruſt,
And brought the youth a victim to the duſt;
So ſtrong the hand of accident appears,
The royal hand from guilt and vengeance clears.
Inſtead of waſting " all thy future years,
" Savage, in prayer and vain repentant tears;"

with ſeverity, which he did not ſeem inclined to forget.

But a return of invective was not thought a ſufficient puniſhment. The Court of King's Bench was therefore moved againſt him, and he was obliged to return an anſwer to a charge of obſcenity. It was urged, in his defence, that obſcenity was criminal when it was intended to promote the practice of vice; but that Mr. Savage had only introduced obſcene ideas, with the view of expoſing them to deteſtation, and of amending the age, by ſhewing the deformity of wickedneſs. This plea was admitted; and Sir Philip Yorke, who then preſided in that court, diſmiſſed the information with encomiums upon

Exert thy pen to mend a vicious age,
To curb the prieſt, and ſink his high-church rage;
To ſhew what frauds the holy veſtments hide,
The neſts of av'rice, luſt, and pedant pride;
Then change the ſcene, let merit brightly ſhine,
And round the patriot twiſt the wreath divine;
The heavenly guide deliver down to fame;
In well-tun'd lays tranſmit a Foſter's name;
Touch every paſſion with harmonious art,
Exalt the genius, and correct the heart.
Thus future times ſhall royal grace extol;
Thus poliſh'd lines thy preſent fame enrol.
—— But grant ——
——Maliciouſly that Savage plung'd the ſteel,
And made the youth its ſhining vengeance feel;
My ſoul abhors the act, the man deteſts,
But more the bigotry in prieſtly breaſts.

GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, May 1735.

the

the purity and excellence of Mr. Savage's writings.

The proſecution, however, anſwered in ſome meaſure the purpoſe of thoſe by whom it was ſet on foot; for Mr. Savage was ſo far intimidated by it, that, when the edition of his poem was ſold, he did not venture to reprint it; ſo that it was in a ſhort time forgotten, or forgotten by all but thoſe whom it offended.

It is ſaid, that ſome endeavours were uſed to incenſe the Queen againſt him: but he found advocates to obviate at leaſt part of their effect; for though he was never advanced, he ſtill continued to receive his penſion.

This poem drew more infamy upon him than any incident of his life; and, as his conduct cannot be vindicated, it is proper to ſecure his memory from reproach, by informing thoſe whom he made his enemies, that he never intended to repeat the provocation; and that, though, whenever he thought he had any reaſon to complain of the clergy, he uſed to threaten them with a new edition of THE PROGRESS OF A DIVINE, it was his calm and ſettled reſolution to ſuppreſs it for ever.

He once intended to have made a better reparation for the folly or injuſtice with which he might be charged, by writing another poem, called, THE PROGRESS OF A FREETHINKER, whom he intended to lead through all the ſtages

of vice and folly, to convert him from virtue to wickedneſs, and from religion to infidelity, by all the modiſh ſophiſtry uſed for that purpoſe; and at laſt to diſmiſs him by his own hand into the other world.

That he did not execute this deſign is a real loſs to mankind, for he was too well acquainted with all the ſcenes of debauchery to have failed in his repreſentations of them, and too zealous for virtue not to have repreſented them in ſuch a manner as ſhould expoſe them either to ridicule or deteſtation.

But this plan was, like others, formed and laid aſide, till the vigour of his imagination was ſpent, and the effervеſcence of invention had ſubſided; but ſoon gave way to ſome other deſign, which pleaſed by its novelty for a while, and then was neglected like the former.

He was ſtill in his uſual exigencies, having no certain ſupport but the penſion allowed him by the Queen, which, though it might have kept an exact œconomiſt from want, was very far from being ſufficient for Mr. Savage, who had never been accuſtomed to diſmiſs any of his appetites without the gratification which they ſolicited, and whom nothing but want of money withheld from partaking of every pleaſure that fell within his view.

His conduct with regard to his penſion was very particular. No ſooner had he changed the bill,

bill, than he vaniſhed from the ſight of all his acquaintances, and lay for ſome time out of the reach of all the enquiries that friendſhip or curioſity could make after him; at length he appeared again pennyleſs as before, but never informed even thoſe whom he ſeemed to regard moſt, where he had been, nor was his retreat ever diſcovered.

This was his conſtant practice during the whole time that he received the penſion from the Queen: He regularly diſappeared and returned. He indeed affirmed, that he retired to ſtudy, and that the money ſupported him in ſolitude for many months; but his friends declared, that the ſhort time in which it was ſpent ſufficiently confuted his own account of his conduct.

His politeneſs and his wit ſtill raiſed him friends, who were deſirous of ſetting him at length free from that indigence by which he had been hitherto oppreſſed; and therefore ſolicited Sir Robert Walpole in his favour with ſo much earneſtneſs, that they obtained a promiſe of the next place that ſhould become vacant, not exceeding two hundred pounds a year. This promiſe was made with an uncommon declaration, "that it was not the promiſe of a miniſter to a "petitioner, but of a friend to his friend."

Mr. Savage now concluded himſelf ſet at eaſe for ever, and, as he obſerves in a poem written on that incident of his life, truſted and was truſted;

truſted; but ſoon found that his confidence was ill-grounded, and this friendly promiſe was not inviolable. He ſpent a long time in ſolicitations, and at laſt deſpaired and deſiſted.

He did not indeed deny that he had given the miniſter ſome reaſon to believe that he ſhould not ſtrengthen his own intereſt by advancing him, for he had taken care to diſtinguiſh himſelf in coffee-houſes as an advocate for the miniſtry of the laſt years of Queen Anne, and was always ready to juſtify the conduct, and exalt the character of Lord Bolingbroke, whom he mentions with great regard in an epiſtle upon authors, which he wrote about that time, but was too wiſe to publiſh, and of which only ſome fragments have appeared, inſerted by him in the MAGAZINE after his retirement.

To deſpair was not, however, the character of Savage; when one patronage failed, he had recourſe to another. The prince was now extremely popular, and had very liberally rewarded the merit of ſome writers, whom Mr. Savage did not think ſuperior to himſelf, and therefore he reſolved to addreſs a poem to him.

For this purpoſe he made choice of a ſubject, which could regard only perſons of the higheſt rank and higheſt affluence, and which was therefore proper for a poem intended to procure the patronage of a prince; and having retired for ſome time to Richmond, that he might proſecute his deſign in full tranquillity, without the tempta-

temptations of pleaſure, or the ſolicitations of creditors, by which his meditations were in equal danger of being diſconcerted, he produced a poem ON PUBLIC SPIRIT, WITH REGARD TO PUBLIC WORKS.

The plan of this poem is very extenſive, and compriſes a multitude of topicks, each of which might furniſh matter ſufficient for a long performance, and of which ſome have already employed more eminent writers; but as he was perhaps not fully acquainted with the whole extent of his own deſign, and was writing to obtain a ſupply of wants too preſſing to admit of long or accurate enquiries, he paſſes negligently over many public works, which, even in his own opinion, deſerved to be more elaborately treated.

But though he may ſometimes diſappoint his reader by tranſient touches upon theſe ſubjects, which have often been conſidered, and therefore naturally raiſe expectations, he muſt be allowed amply to compenſate his omiſſions, by expatiating, in the concluſion of his work, upon a kind of beneficence not yet celebrated by any eminent poet, though it now appears more ſuſceptible of embelliſhments, more adapted to exalt the ideas, and affect the paſſions, than many of thoſe which have hitherto been thought moſt worthy of the ornaments of verſe. The ſettlement of colonies in uninhabited countries, the eſtabliſhment of thoſe in ſecurity, whoſe misfortunes

misfortunes have made their own country no longer pleaſing or ſafe, the acquiſition of property without injury to any, the appropriation of the waſte and luxuriant bounties of nature, and the enjoyment of thoſe gifts which heaven has ſcattered upon regions uncultivated and unoccupied, cannot be conſidered without giving riſe to a great number of pleaſing ideas, and bewildering the imagination in delightful proſpects; and, therefore, whatever ſpeculations they may produce in thoſe who have confined themſelves to political ſtudies, naturally fixed the attention, and excited the applauſe, of a poet. The politician, when he conſiders men driven into other countries for ſhelter, and obliged to retire to foreſts and deſerts, and paſs their lives and fix their poſterity in the remoteſt corners of the world, to avoid thoſe hardſhips which they ſuffer or fear in their native place, may very properly enquire, why the legiſlature does not provide a remedy for theſe miſeries, rather than encourage an eſcape from them. He may conclude, that the flight of every honeſt man is a loſs to the community; that thoſe who are unhappy without guilt ought to be relieved; and the life, which is overburthened by accidental calamities, ſet at eaſe by the care of the public; and that thoſe, who have by miſconduct forfeited their claim to favour, ought rather to be made uſeful to the ſociety which they have injured, than be driven

from it. But the poet is employed in a more pleaſing undertaking than that of propoſing laws, which, however juſt or expedient, will never be made, or endeavouring to reduce to rational ſchemes of government ſocieties which were formed by chance, and are conducted by the private paſſions of thoſe who preſide in them. He guides the unhappy fugitive from want and perſecution, to plenty, quiet, and ſecurity, and ſeats him in ſcenes of peaceful ſolitude, and undiſturbed repoſe.

Savage has not forgotten, amidſt the pleaſing ſentiments which this proſpect of retirement ſuggeſted to him, to cenſure thoſe crimes which have been generally committed by the diſcoverers of new regions, and to expoſe the enormous wickedneſs of making war upon barbarous nations becauſe they cannot reſiſt, and of invading countries becauſe they are fruitful; of extending navigation only to propagate vice, and of viſiting diſtant lands only to lay them waſte. He has aſſerted the natural equality of mankind, and endeavoured to ſuppreſs that pride which inclines men to imagine that right is the conſequence of power.

His deſcription of the various miſeries which force men to ſeek for refuge in diſtant countries, affords another inſtance of his proficiency in the important and extenſive ſtudy of human life; and the tenderneſs with which he recounts them, another proof of his humanity and benevolence.

It

It is obſervable, that the cloſe of this poem diſcovers a change which experience had made in Mr. Savage's opinions. In a poem written by him in his youth, and publiſhed in his Miſcellanies, he declares his contempt of the contracted views and narrow proſpects of the middle ſtate of life, and declares his reſolution either to tower like the cedar, or be trampled like the ſhrub; but in this poem, though addreſſed to a prince, he mentions this ſtate of life as compriſing thoſe who ought moſt to attract reward, thoſe who merit moſt the confidence of power, and the familiarity of greatneſs; and, accidentally mentioning this paſſage to one of his friends, declared, that in his opinion all the virtue of mankind was comprehended in that ſtate.

In deſcribing villas and gardens, he did not omit to condemn that abſurd cuſtom which prevails among the Engliſh, of permitting ſervants to receive money from ſtrangers for the entertainment that they receive, and therefore inſerted in his poem theſe lines;

But what the flowering pride of gardens rare,
However royal, or however fair,
If gates, which to acceſs ſhould ſtill give way,
Ope but, like Peter's paradiſe, for pay?
If perquiſited varlets frequent ſtand,
And each new walk muſt a new tax demand?
What foreign eye but with contempt ſurveys?
What Muſe ſhall from oblivion ſnatch their praiſe?

But

But before the publication of his performance he recollected, that the Queen allowed her garden and cave at Richmond to be ſhewn for money, and that ſhe ſo openly countenanced the practice; that ſhe had beſtowed the privilege of ſhewing them as a place of profit on a man, whoſe merit ſhe valued herſelf upon rewarding, though ſhe gave him only the liberty of diſgracing his country.

He therefore thought, with more prudence than was often exerted by him, that the publication of theſe lines might be officiouſly repreſented as an inſult upon the Queen, to whom he owed his life and his ſubſiſtence; and that the propriety of his obſervation would be no ſecurity againſt the cenſures which the unſeaſonableneſs of it might draw upon him; he therefore ſuppreſſed the paſſage in the firſt edition, but after the Queen's death thought the ſame caution no longer neceſſary, and reſtored it to the proper place.

The poem was therefore publiſhed without any political faults, and inſcribed to the Prince; but Mr. Savage, having no friend upon whom he could prevail to preſent it to him, had no other method of attracting his obſervation than the publication of frequent advertiſements, and therefore received no reward from his patron, however generous on other occaſions.

This

This diſappointment he never mentioned without indignation, being by ſome means or other confident that the Prince was not ignorant of his addreſs to him; and inſinuated, that, if any advances in popularity could have been made by diſtinguiſhing him, he had not written without notice, or without reward.

He was once inclined to have preſented his poem in perſon, and ſent to the printer for a copy with that deſign; but either his opinion changed, or his reſolution deſerted him, and he continued to reſent neglect without attempting to force himſelf into regard.

Nor was the public much more favourable than his patron, for only ſeventy-two were ſold, though the performance was much commended by ſome whoſe judgement in that kind of writing is generally allowed. But Savage eaſily reconciled himſelf to mankind without imputing any defect to his work, by obſerving that his poem was unluckily publiſhed two days after the prorogation of the parliament, and by conſequence at a time when all thoſe who could be expected to regard it were in the hurry of preparing for their departure, or engaged in taking leave of others upon their diſmiſſion from public affairs.

It muſt be however allowed, in juſtification of the public, that this performance is not the moſt excellent of Mr. Savage's works; and that, though it cannot be denied to contain many

ſtriking

ſtriking ſentiments, majeſtic lines, and juſt obſervations, it is in general not ſufficiently poliſhed in the language, or enlivened in the imagery, or digeſted in the plan.

Thus his poem contributed nothing to the alleviation of his poverty, which was ſuch as very few could have ſupported with equal patience; but to which it muſt likewiſe be confeſſed, that few would have been expoſed who received punctually fifty pounds a year; a ſalary which though by no means equal to the demands of vanity and luxury, is yet found ſufficient to ſupport families above want, and was undoubtedly more than the neceſſities of life require.

But no ſooner had he received his penſion, than he withdrew to his darling privacy, from which he returned in a ſhort time to his former diſtreſs, and for ſome part of the year generally lived by chance, eating only when he was invited to the tables of his acquaintances, from which the meanneſs of his dreſs often excluded him, when the politeneſs and variety of his converſation would have been thought a ſufficient recompence for his entertainment.

He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and paſſed the night ſometimes in mean houſes, which are ſet open at night to any caſual wanderers, ſometimes in cellars among the riot and filth of the meaneſt and moſt profligate of the rabble; and ſometimes, when he had not

money to ſupport even the expences of theſe receptacles, walked about the ſtreets till he was weary, and lay down in the ſummer upon a bulk, or in the winter, with his aſſociates in poverty, among the aſhes of a glaſs-houſe.

In this manner were paſſed thoſe days and thoſe nights which nature had enabled him to have employed in elevated ſpeculations, uſeful ſtudies, or pleaſing converſation. On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glaſs-houſe among thieves and beggars, was to be found the Author of THE WANDERER, the man of exalted ſentiments, extenſive views, and curious obſervations; the man whoſe remarks on life might have aſſiſted the ſtateſman, whoſe ideas of virtue might have enlightened the moraliſt, whoſe eloquence might have influenced ſenates, and whoſe delicacy might have poliſhed courts.

It cannot but be imagined that ſuch neceſſities might ſometimes force him upon diſreputable practices; and it is probable that theſe lines in THE WANDERER were occaſioned by his reflections on his own conduct:

Though miſery leads to happineſs, and truth,
Unequal to the load, this languid youth,
(O, let none cenſure, if, untried by grief,
If, amidſt woe, untempted by relief,)
He ſtoop'd reluctant to low arts of ſhame,
Which then, ev'n then he ſcorn'd, and bluſh'd to name.

Whoever

Whoever was acquainted with him was certain to be ſolicited for ſmall ſums, which the frequency of the requeſt made in time conſiderable, and he was therefore quickly ſhunned by thoſe who were become familiar enough to be truſted with his neceſſities; but his rambling manner of life, and conſtant appearance at houſes of public reſort, always procured him a new ſucceſſion of friends, whoſe kindneſs had not been exhauſted by repeated requeſts, ſo that he was ſeldom abſolutely without reſources, but had in his utmoſt exigences this comfort, that he always imagined himſelf ſure of ſpeedy relief.

It was obſerved, that he always aſked favours of this kind without the leaſt ſubmiſſion or apparent conſciouſneſs of dependence, and that he did not ſeem to look upon a compliance with his requeſt as an obligation that deſerved any extraordinary acknowledgments; but a refuſal was reſented by him as an affront, or complained of as an injury; nor did he readily reconcile himſelf to thoſe who either denied to lend, or gave him afterwards any intimation that they expected to be repaid.

He was ſometimes ſo far compaſſionated by thoſe who knew both his merit and diſtreſſes, that they received him into their families, but they ſoon diſcovered him to be a very incommo-

dious inmate; for, being always accuſtomed to an irregular manner of life, he could not confine himſelf to any ſtated hours, or pay any regard to the rules of a family, but would prolong his converſation till midnight, without conſidering that buſineſs might require his friend's application in the morning; and, when he had perſuaded himſelf to retire to bed, was not, without equal difficulty, called up to dinner; it was therefore impoſſible to pay him any diſtinction without the entire ſubverſion of all œconomy, a kind of eſtabliſhment which, wherever he went, he always appeared ambitious to overthrow.

It muſt therefore be acknowledged, in juſtification of mankind, that it was not always by the negligence or coldneſs of his friends that Savage was diſtreſſed, but becauſe it was in reality very difficult to preſerve him long in a ſtate of eaſe. To ſupply him with money was a hopeleſs attempt, for no ſooner did he ſee himſelf maſter of a ſum ſufficient to ſet him free from care for a day, than he became profuſe and luxurious. When once he had entered a tavern, or engaged in a ſcheme of pleaſure, he never retired till want of money obliged him to ſome new expedient. If he was entertained in a family, nothing was any longer to be regarded there but amuſements and jollity; wherever Savage entered, he immediately ex-

pected that order and buſineſs ſhould fly before him, that all ſhould thenceforward be left to hazard, and that no dull principle of domeſtic management ſhould be oppoſed to his inclination, or intrude upon his gaiety.

His diſtreſſes, however afflictive, never dejected him; in his loweſt ſtate he wanted not ſpirit to aſſert the natural dignity of wit, and was always ready to repreſs that inſolence which ſuperiority of fortune incited, and to trample on that reputation which roſe upon any other baſis than that of merit: he never admitted any groſs familiarities, or ſubmitted to be treated otherwiſe than as an equal. Once, when he was without lodging, meat, or cloaths, one of his friends, a man not indeed remarkable for moderation in his proſperity, left a meſſage, that he deſired to ſee him about nine in the morning. Savage knew that his intention was to aſſiſt him; but was very much diſguſted that he ſhould preſume to preſcribe the hour of his attendance, and, I believe, refuſed to viſit him, and rejected his kindneſs.

The ſame invincible temper, whether firmneſs or obſtinacy, appeared in his conduct to the Lord Tyrconnel, from whom he very frequently demanded, that the allowance which was once paid him ſhould be reſtored; but with whom he never appeared to entertain for a moment the thought of ſoliciting a reconciliation,

and whom he treated at once with all the haughtineſs of ſuperiority, and all the bitterneſs of reſentment. He wrote to him, not in a ſtyle of ſupplication or reſpect, but of reproach, menace, and contempt; and appeared determined, if he ever regained his allowance, to hold it only by the right of conqueſt.

As many more can diſcover, that a man is richer than that he is wiſer than themſelves, ſuperiority of underſtanding is not ſo readily acknowledged as that of fortune; nor is that haughtineſs, which the conſciouſneſs of great abilities incites, borne with the ſame ſubmiſſion as the tyranny of affluence; and therefore Savage, by aſſerting his claim to deference and regard, and by treating thoſe with contempt whom better fortune animated to rebel againſt him, did not fail to raiſe a great number of enemies in the different claſſes of mankind. Thoſe who thought themſelves raiſed above him by the advantages of riches, hated him becauſe they found no protection from the petulance of his wit. Thoſe who were eſteemed for their writings feared him as a critic, and maligned him as a rival, and almoſt all the ſmaller wits were his profeſſed enemies.

Among theſe Mr. Millar ſo far indulged his reſentment as to introduce him in a farce, and direct him to be perſonated on the ſtage in a dreſs like that which he then wore; a mean

inſult,

inſult, which only inſinuated that Savage had but one coat, and which was therefore deſpiſed by him rather than reſented; for though he wrote a lampoon againſt Millar, he never printed it: and as no other perſon ought to proſecute that revenge from which the perſon who was injured deſiſted, I ſhall not preſerve what Mr. Savage ſuppreſſed; of which the publication would indeed have been a puniſhment too ſevere for ſo impotent an aſſault.

The great hardſhips of poverty were to Savage not the want of lodging or of food, but the neglect and contempt which it drew upon him. He complained, that as his affairs grew deſperate, he found his reputation for capacity viſibly decline; that his opinion in queſtions of criticiſm was no longer regarded, when his coat was out of faſhion; and that thoſe who in the interval of his proſperity were always encouraging him to great undertakings by encomiums on his genius and aſſurances of ſucceſs, now received any mention of his deſigns with coldneſs, thought that the ſubjects on which he propoſed to write were very difficult, and were ready to inform him, that the event of a poem was uncertain, that an author ought to employ much time in the conſideration of his plan, and not preſume to ſit down to write in confidence of a few curſory ideas, and a ſuperficial knowledge; difficulties were ſtarted on all ſides, and

he was no longer qualified for any performance but THE VOLUNTEER LAUREAT.

Yet even this kind of contempt never depreſſed him; for he always preſerved a ſteady confidence in his own capacity, and believed nothing above his reach which he ſhould at any time earneſtly endeavour to attain. He formed ſchemes of the ſame kind with regard to knowledge and to fortune, and flattered himſelf with advances to be made in ſcience, as with riches, to be enjoyed in ſome diſtant period of his life. For the acquiſition of knowledge he was indeed far better qualified than for that of riches; for he was naturally inquiſitive and deſirous of the converſation of thoſe from whom any information was to be obtained, but by no means ſolicitous to improve thoſe opportunities that were ſometimes offered of raiſing his fortune; and he was remarkably retentive of his ideas, which, when once he was in poſſeſſion of them, rarely forſook him; a quality which could never be communicated to his money.

While he was thus wearing out his life in expectation that the Queen would ſome time recollect her promiſe, he had recourſe to the uſual practice of writers, and publiſhed propoſals for printing his works by ſubſcription, to which he was encouraged by the ſucceſs of many who had not a better right to the favour of the public; but, whatever was the reaſon, he did

did not find the world equally inclined to favour him; and he obſerved with ſome diſcontent, that, though he offered his works at half a guinea, he was able to procure but a ſmall number in compariſon with thoſe who ſubſcribed twice as much to Duck.

Nor was it without indignation that he ſaw his propoſals neglected by the Queen, who patroniſed Mr. Duck's with uncommon ardour, and incited a competition among thoſe who attended the court, who ſhould moſt promote his intereſt, and who ſhould firſt offer a ſubſcription. This was a diſtinction to which Mr. Savage made no ſcruple of aſſerting that his birth, his misfortunes, and his genius, gave him a fairer title, than could be pleaded by him on whom it was conferred.

Savage's applications were however not univerſally unſucceſsful; for ſome of the nobility countenanced his deſign, encouraged his propoſals, and ſubſcribed with great liberality. He related of the Duke of Chandos particularly, that, upon receiving his propoſals, he ſent him ten guineas.

But the money which his ſubſcriptions afforded him was not leſs volatile than that which he received from his other ſchemes; whenever a ſubſcription was paid him he went to a tavern; and, as money ſo collected is neceſſarily received in ſmall ſums, he never was able to ſend his poems

poems to the preſs, but for many years continued his ſolicitation, and ſquandered whatever he obtained.

This project of printing his works was frequently revived; and, as his propoſals grew obſolete, new ones were printed with freſher dates. To form ſchemes for the publication was one of his favourite amuſements; nor was he ever more at eaſe than when, with any friend who readily fell-in with his ſchemes, he was adjuſting the print, forming the advertiſements, and regulating the diſperſion of his new edition, which he really intended ſome time to publiſh, and which, as long as experience had ſhewn him the impoſſibility of printing the volume together, he at laſt determined to divide into weekly or monthly numbers, that the profits of the firſt might ſupply the expences of the next.

Thus he ſpent his time in mean expedients and tormenting ſuſpenſe, living for the greateſt part in the fear of proſecutions from his creditors, and conſequently ſkulking in obſcure parts of the town, of which he was no ſtranger to the remoteſt corners. But wherever he came, his addreſs ſecured him friends, whom his neceſſities ſoon alienated; ſo that he had perhaps a more numerous acquaintance than any man ever before attained, there being ſcarcely any perſon eminent on any account to whom he was

not

not known, or whoſe character he was not in ſome degree able to delineate.

To the acquiſition of this extenſive acquaintance every circumſtance of his life contributed. He excelled in the arts of converſation, and therefore willingly practiſed them: He had ſeldom any home, or even a lodging in which he could be private; and therefore was driven into public-houſes for the common conveniences of life and ſupports of nature. He was always ready to comply with every invitation, having no employment to withhold him, and often no money to provide for himſelf; and by dining with one company, he never failed of obtaining an introduction into another.

Thus diſſipated was his life, and thus caſual his ſubſiſtence; yet did not the diſtraction of his views hinder him from reflection, nor the uncertainty of his condition depreſs his gaiety. When he had wandered about without any fortunate adventure by which he was led into a tavern, he ſometimes retired into the fields, and was able to employ his mind in ſtudy, or amuſe it with pleaſing imaginations; and ſeldom appeared to be melancholy, but when ſome ſudden misfortune had juſt fallen upon him, and even then in a few moments he would diſentangle himſelf from his perplexity, adopt the ſubject of converſation, and apply his mind wholly to the objects that others preſented to it.

This

This life, unhappy as it may be already imagined, was yet imbittered, in 1738, with new calamities. The death of the Queen deprived him of all the proſpects of preferment with which he ſo long entertained his imagination; and, as Sir Robert Walpole had before given him reaſon to believe that he never intended the performance of his promiſe, he was now abandoned again to fortune.

He was however, at that time, ſupported by a friend; and as it was not his cuſtom to look out for diſtant calamities, or to feel any other pain than that which forced itſelf upon his ſenſes, he was not much afflicted at his loſs, and perhaps comforted himſelf that his penſion would be now continued without the annual tribute of a panegyric.

Another expectation contributed likewiſe to ſupport him: he had taken a reſolution to write a ſecond tragedy upon the ſtory of Sir Thomas Overbury, in which he preſerved a few lines of his former play, but made a total alteration of the plan, added new incidents, and introduced new characters; ſo that it was a new tragedy, not a revival of the former.

Many of his friends blamed him for not making choice of another ſubject; but, in vindication of himſelf, he aſſerted, that it was not eaſy to find a better; and that he thought it his intereſt to extinguiſh the memory of the firſt tragedy,

tragedy, which he could only do by writing one leſs defective upon the ſame ſtory; by which he ſhould entirely defeat the artifice of the bookſellers, who, after the death of any author of reputation, are always induſtrious to ſwell his works, by uniting his worſt productions with his beſt.

In the execution of this ſcheme, however, he proceeded but ſlowly, and probably only employed himſelf upon it when he could find no other amuſement; but he pleaſed himſelf with counting the profits, and perhaps imagined, that the theatrical reputation which he was about to acquire, would be equivalent to all that he had loſt by the death of his patroneſs.

He did not, in confidence of his approaching riches, neglect the meaſures proper to ſecure the continuance of his penſion, though ſome of his favourers thought him culpable for omitting to write on her death; but on her birth-day next year, he gave a proof of the ſolidity of his judgement, and the power of his genius. He knew that the track of elegy had been ſo long beaten, that it was impoſſible to travel in it without treading in the footſteps of thoſe who had gone before him; and that therefore it was neceſſary, that he might diſtinguiſh himſelf from the herd of encomiaſts, to find out ſome new walk of funeral panegyric.

This

This difficult task he performed in such a manner, that his poem may be justly ranked among the best pieces that the death of princes has produced. By transferring the mention of her death to her birth-day, he has formed a happy combination of topics, which any other man would have thought it very difficult to connect in one view, but which he has united in such a manner, that the relation between them appears natural; and it may be justly said, that what no other man would have thought on, it now appears scarcely possible for any man to miss.

The beauty of this peculiar combination of images is so masterly, that it is sufficient to set this poem above censure; and therefore it is not necessary to mention many other delicate touches which may be found in it, and which would deservedly be admired in any other performance.

To these proofs of his genius may be added, from the same poem, an instance of his prudence, an excellence for which he was not so often distinguished; he does not forget to remind the King, in the most delicate and artful manner, of continuing his pension.

With regard to the success of this address, he was for some time in suspence, but was in no great degree solicitous about it; and continued his labour upon his new tragedy with great tranquillity, till the friend who had for a considerable

ſiderable time ſupported him, removing his family to another place, took occaſion to diſmiſs him. It then became neceſſary to enquire more diligently what was determined in his affair, having reaſon to ſuſpect that no great favour was intended him, becauſe he had not received his penſion at the uſual time.

It is ſaid, that he did not take thoſe methods of retrieving his intereſt, which were moſt likely to ſucceeed; and ſome of thoſe who were employed in the Exchequer, cautioned him againſt too much violence in his proceedings; but Mr. Savage, who ſeldom regulated his conduct by the advice of others, gave way to his paſſion, and demanded of Sir Robert Walpole, at his levee, the reaſon of the diſtinction that was made between him and the other penſioners of the Queen, with a degree of roughneſs which perhaps determined him to withdraw what had been only delayed.

Whatever was the crime of which he was accuſed or ſuſpected, and whatever influence was employed againſt him, he received ſoon after an account that took from him all hopes of regaining his penſion; and he had now no proſpect of ſubſiſtence but from his play, and he knew no way of living for the time required to finiſh it.

So peculiar were the misfortunes of this man, deprived of an eſtate and title by a particular law,

law, expoſed and abandoned by a mother, defrauded by a mother of a fortune which his father had allotted him, he entered the world without a friend; and though his abilities forced themſelves into eſteem and reputation, he was never able to obtain any real advantage, and whatever proſpects aroſe were always intercepted as he began to approach them. The King's intentions in his favour were fruſtrated; his dedication to the Prince, whoſe generoſity on every other occaſion was eminent, procured him no reward; Sir Robert Walpole, who valued himſelf upon keeping his promiſe to others, broke it to him without regret; and the bounty of the Queen was, after her death, withdrawn from him, and from him only.

Such were his misfortunes, which yet he bore not only with decency, but with chearfulneſs; nor was his gaiety clouded even by his laſt diſappointments, though he was in a ſhort time reduced to the loweſt degree of diſtreſs, and often wanted both lodging and food. At this time he gave another inſtance of the inſurmountable obſtinacy of his ſpirit: his cloaths were worn out; and he received notice, that at a coffee-houſe ſome cloaths and linen were left for him: the perſon who ſent them, did not, I believe, inform him to whom he was to be obliged, that he might ſpare the perplexity of acknowledging the benefit; but though the offer

offer was ſo far generous, it was made with ſome neglect of ceremonies, which Mr. Savage ſo much reſented, that he refuſed the preſent, and declined to enter the houſe till the cloaths that had been deſigned for him were taken away.

His diſtreſs was now publickly known, and his friends, therefore, thought it proper to concert ſome meaſures for his relief; and one of them wrote a letter to him, in which he expreſſed his concern "for the miſerable with-"drawing of his penſion;" and gave him hopes, that in a ſhort time he ſhould find himſelf ſupplied with a competence, "without any "dependence on thoſe little creatures which "we are pleaſed to call the Great."

The ſcheme propoſed for this happy and independent ſubſiſtence, was, that he ſhould retire into Wales, and receive an allowance of fifty pounds a year, to be raiſed by a ſubſcription, on which he was to live privately in a cheap place, without aſpiring any more to affluence, or having any farther care of reputation.

This offer Mr. Savage gladly accepted, though with intentions very different from thoſe of his friends; for they propoſed that he ſhould continue an exile from London for ever, and ſpend all the remaining part of his life at Swanſea; but he deſigned only to take the opportunity,

which their ſcheme offered him, of retreating for a ſhort time, that he might prepare his play for the ſtage, and his other works for the preſs, and then to return to London to exhibit his tragedy, and live upon the profits of his own labour.

With regard to his works, he propoſed very great improvements, which would have required much time, or great application; and when he had finiſhed them, he deſigned to do juſtice to his ſubſcribers, by publiſhing them according to his propoſals.

As he was ready to entertain himſelf with future pleaſures, he had planned out a ſcheme of life for the country, of which he had no knowledge but from paſtorals and ſongs. He imagined that he ſhould be tranſported to ſcenes of flowery felicity, like thoſe which one poet has reflected to another; and had projected a perpetual round of innocent pleaſures, of which he ſuſpected no interruption from pride, or ignorance, or brutality.

With theſe expectations he was ſo enchanted, that when he was once gently reproached by a friend for ſubmitting to live upon a ſubſcription, and adviſed rather by a reſolute exertion of his abilities to ſupport himſelf, he could not bear to debar himſelf from the happineſs which was to be found in the calm of a cottage, or loſe the opportunity of liſtening, without intermiſſion,

to

to the melody of the nightingale, which he believed was to be heard from every bramble, and which he did not fail to mention as a very important part of the happineſs of a country life.

While this ſcheme was ripening, his friends directed him to take a lodging in the liberties of the Fleet, that he might be ſecure from his creditors, and ſent him every Monday a guinea, which he commonly ſpent before the next morning, and truſted, after his uſual manner, the remaining part of the week to the bounty of fortune.

He now began very ſenſibly to feel the miſeries of dependence: Thoſe by whom he was to be ſupported, began to preſcribe to him with an air of authority, which he knew not how decently to reſent, nor patiently to bear; and he ſoon diſcovered, from the conduct of moſt of his ſubſcribers, that he was yet in the hands of "little creatures."

Of the inſolence that he was obliged to ſuffer, he gave many inſtances, of which none appeared to raiſe his indignation to a greater height, than the method which was taken of furniſhing him with cloaths. Inſtead of conſulting him, and allowing him to ſend a taylor his orders for what they thought proper to allow him, they propoſed to ſend for a taylor to take his meaſure, and then to conſult how they ſhould equip him.

This treatment was not very delicate, nor was it ſuch as Savage's humanity would have ſuggeſted to him on a like occaſion; but it had ſcarcely deſerved mention, had it not, by affecting him in an uncommon degree, ſhewn the peculiarity of his character. Upon hearing the deſign that was formed, he came to the lodging of a friend with the moſt violent agonies of rage; and, being aſked what it could be that gave him ſuch diſturbance, he replied with the utmoſt vehemence of indignation, "That they "had ſent for a taylor to meaſure him."

How the affair ended was never enquired, for fear of renewing his uneaſineſs. It is probable, that, upon recollection, he ſubmitted with a good grace to what he could not avoid, and that he diſcovered no reſentment where he had no power.

He was, however, not humbled to implicit and univerſal compliance; for when the gentleman, who had firſt informed him of the deſign to ſupport him by a ſubſcription, attempted to procure a reconciliation with the Lord Tyrconnel, he could by no means be prevailed upon to comply with the meaſures that were propoſed.

A letter was written for him * to Sir William Lemon, to prevail upon him to interpoſe his good offices with Lord Tyrconnel, in which he ſolicited Sir William's aſſiſtance, "for a man

* By Mr. Pope.

"who

"who really needed it as much as any man "could well do;" and informed him, that he was retiring "for ever to a place where he "ſhould no more trouble his relations, friends, "or enemies;" he confeſſed, that his paſſion had betrayed him to ſome conduct with regard to Lord Tyrconnel, "for which he could not "but heartily aſk his pardon;" and as he imagined Lord Tyrconnel's paſſion might be yet ſo high, that he would not "receive a letter from "him," begged that Sir William would endeavour to ſoften him; and expreſſed his hopes that he would comply with his requeſt, and that "ſo ſmall a relation would not harden his "heart againſt him."

That any man ſhould preſume to dictate a letter to him, was not very agreeable to Mr. Savage; and therefore he was, before he had opened it, not much inclined to approve it. But when he read it, he found it contained ſentiments entirely oppoſite to his own, and, as he aſſerted, to the truth; and therefore, inſtead of copying it, wrote his friend a letter full of maſculine reſentment and warm expoſtulations. He very juſtly obſerved, that the ſtyle was too ſupplicatory, and the repreſentation too abject, and that he ought at leaſt to have made him complain with "the dignity of a gentleman in "diſtreſs." He declared that he would not write the paragraph in which he was to aſk

Lord Tyrconnel's pardon; for, "he deſpiſed his "pardon, and therefore could not heartily, "and would not hypocritically, aſk it." He remarked, that his friend made a very unreaſonable diſtinction between himſelf and him; for, ſays he, when you mention men of high rank "in your own character," they are "thoſe "little creatures whom we are pleaſed to call "the great;" but when you addreſs them "in "mine," no ſervility is ſufficiently humble. He then with great propriety explained the ill conſequences which might be expected from ſuch a letter, which his relations would print in their own defence, and which would for ever be produced as a full anſwer to all that he ſhould alledge againſt them; for he always intended to publiſh a minute account of the treatment which he had received. It is to be remembered, to the honour of the gentleman by whom this letter was drawn up, that he yielded to Mr. Savage's reaſons, and agreed that it ought to be ſuppreſſed.

After many alterations and delays, a ſubſcription was at length raiſed which did not amount to fifty pounds a year, though twenty were paid by one gentleman; ſuch was the generoſity of mankind, that what had been done by a player without ſolicitation, could not now be effected by application and intereſt; and Savage had a great number to court and to obey for a penſion

ſion leſs than that which Mrs. Oldfield paid him without exacting any ſervilities.

Mr. Savage however was ſatisfied, and willing to retire, and was convinced that the allowance, though ſcanty, would be more than ſufficient for him, being now determined to commence a rigid œconomiſt, and to live according to the exacteſt rules of frugality; for nothing was in his opinion more contemptible than a man, who, when he knew his income, exceeded it; and yet he confeſſed, that inſtances of ſuch folly were too common, and lamented that ſome men were not to be truſted with their own money.

Full of theſe ſalutary reſolutions, he left London in July 1739, having taken leave with great tenderneſs of his friends, and parted from the author of this narrative with tears in his eyes. He was furniſhed with fifteen guineas, and informed, that they would be ſufficient, not only for the expence of his journey, but for his ſupport in Wales for ſome time; and that there remained but little more of the firſt collection. He promiſed a ſtrict adherence to his maxims of parſimony, and went away in the ſtage-coach; nor did his friends expect to hear from him, till he informed them of his arrival at Swanſea.

But when they leaſt expected, arrived a letter dated the fourteenth day after his departure,

in which he ſent them word, that he was yet upon the road, and without money; and that he therefore could not proceed without a remittance. They then ſent him the money that was in their hands, with which he was enabled to reach Briſtol, from whence he was to go to Swanſea by water.

At Briſtol he found an embargo laid upon the ſhipping, ſo that he could not immediately obtain a paſſage; and being therefore obliged to ſtay there ſome time, he, with his uſual felicity, ingratiated himſelf with many of the principal inhabitants, was invited to their houſes, diſtinguiſhed at their public feaſts, and treated with a regard that gratified his vanity, and therefore eaſily engaged his affection.

He began very early after his retirement to complain of the conduct of his friends in London, and irritated many of them ſo much by his letters, that they withdrew, however honourably, their contributions; and it is believed, that little more was paid him than the twenty pounds a year, which were allowed him by the gentleman who propoſed the ſubſcription.

After ſome ſtay at Briſtol he retired to Swanſea, the place originally propoſed for his reſidence, where he lived about a year very much diſſatisfied with the diminution of his ſalary; but contracted, as in other places, acquaintance with thoſe who were moſt diſtinguiſhed in that country,

country, among whom he has celebrated Mr. Powel and Mrs. Jones, by ſome verſes which he inſerted in THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE *.

Here he compleated his tragedy, of which two acts were wanting when he left London, and was deſirous of coming to town to bring it upon the ſtage. This deſign was very warmly oppoſed, and he was adviſed by his chief benefactor to put it into the hands of Mr. Thomſon and Mr. Mallet, that it might be fitted for the ſtage, and to allow his friends to receive the profits, out of which an annual penſion ſhould be paid him.

This propoſal he rejected with the utmoſt contempt. He was by no means convinced that the judgment of thoſe, to whom he was required to ſubmit, was ſuperior to his own. He was now determined, as he expreſſed it, to be "no "longer kept in leading-ſtrings," and had no elevated idea of "his bounty, who propoſed to "penſion him out of the profits of his own "labours."

He attempted in Wales to promote a ſubſcription for his works, and had once hopes of ſucceſs; but in a ſhort time afterwards formed a reſolution of leaving that part of the country, to which he thought it not reaſonable to be confined for the gratification of thoſe, who, having promiſed him a liberal income, had no ſooner

* Reprinted in this volume.

baniſhed

baniſhed him to a remote corner, than they reduced his allowance to a ſalary ſcarcely equal to the neceſſities of life.

His reſentment of this treatment, which, in his own opinion at leaſt, he had not deſerved, was ſuch, that he broke off all correſpondence with moſt of his contributors, and appeared to conſider them as perſecutors and oppreſſors; and in the latter part of his life declared, that their conduct toward him, ſince his departure from London, "had been perfidiouſneſs improving on perfidiouſneſs, and inhumanity on "inhumanity."

It is not to be ſuppoſed, that the neceſſities of Mr. Savage did not ſometimes incite him to ſatirical exaggerations of the behaviour of thoſe by whom he thought himſelf reduced to them. But it muſt be granted, that the diminution of his allowance was a great hardſhip, and that thoſe who withdrew their ſubſcription from a man, who, upon the faith of their promiſe, had gone into a kind of baniſhment, and abandoned all thoſe by whom he had been before relieved in his diſtreſſes, will find it no eaſy taſk to vindicate their conduct.

It may be alledged, and perhaps juſtly, that he was petulant and contemptuous, that he more frequently reproached his ſubſcribers for not giving him more, than thanked them for what he received; but it is to be remembered, that this

this conduct, and this is the worſt charge that can be drawn up againſt him, did them no real injury; and that it therefore ought rather to have been pitied than reſented, at leaſt the reſentment it might provoke ought to have been generous and manly; epithets which his conduct will hardly deſerve that ſtarves the man whom he has perſuaded to put himſelf into his power.

It might have been reaſonably demanded by Savage, that they ſhould, before they had taken away what they promiſed, have replaced him in his former ſtate, that they ſhould have taken no advantages from the ſituation to which the appearance of their kindneſs had reduced him, and that he ſhould have been recalled to London before he was abandoned. He might juſtly repreſent, that he ought to have been conſidered as a lion in the toils, and demand to be releaſed before the dogs ſhould be looſed upon him.

He endeavoured, indeed, to releaſe himſelf, and, with an intent to return to London, went to Briſtol, where a repetition of the kindneſs which he had formerly found invited him to ſtay. He was not only careſſed and treated, but had a collection made for him of about thirty pounds, with which it had been happy if he had immediately departed for London; but his negligence did not ſuffer him to conſider, that ſuch proofs of kindneſs were not often to be expected, and that this ardour of benevolence was in a great degree

degree the effect of novelty, and might, probably, be every day leſs; and therefore he took no care to improve the happy time, but was encouraged by one favour to hope for another, till at length generoſity was exhauſted, and officiouſneſs wearied.

Another part of his miſconduct was the practice of prolonging his viſits to unſeaſonable hours, and diſconcerting all the families into which he was admitted. This was an error in a place of commerce which all the charms of his converſation could not compenſate; for what trader would purchaſe ſuch airy ſatisfaction by the loſs of ſolid gain, which muſt be the conſequence of midnight merriment, as thoſe hours which were gained at night were generally loſt in the morning?

Thus Mr. Savage, after the curioſity of the inhabitants was gratified, found the number of his friends daily decreaſing, perhaps without ſuſpecting for what reaſon their conduct was altered; for he ſtill continued to harraſs, with his nocturnal intruſions, thoſe that yet countenanced him, and admitted him to their houſes.

But he did not ſpend all the time of his reſidence at Briſtol in viſits or at taverns, for he ſometimes returned to his ſtudies, and began ſeveral conſiderable deſigns. When he felt an inclination to write, he always retired from the knowledge of his friends, and lay hid in an obſcure

obſcure part of the ſuburbs, till he found himſelf again deſirous of company, to which it is likely that intervals of abſence made him more welcome.

He was always full of his deſign of returning to London, to bring his tragedy upon the ſtage; but, having neglected to depart with the money that was raiſed for him, he could not afterwards procure a ſum ſufficient to defray the expences of his journey; nor perhaps would a freſh ſupply have had any other effect, than, by putting immediate pleaſures in his power, to have driven the thoughts of his journey out of his mind.

While he was thus ſpending the day in contriving a ſcheme for the morrow, diſtreſs ſtole upon him by imperceptible degrees. His conduct had already wearied ſome of thoſe who were at firſt enamoured of his converſation; but he might, perhaps, ſtill have devolved to others, whom he might have entertained with equal ſucceſs, had not the decay of his cloaths made it no longer conſiſtent with their vanity to admit him to their tables, or to aſſociate with him in public places. He now began to find every man from home at whoſe houſe he called; and was therefore no longer able to procure the neceſſaries of life, but wandered about the town ſlighted and neglected, in queſt of a dinner, which he did not always obtain.

To complete his misery, he was pursued by the officers for small debts which he had contracted; and was therefore obliged to withdraw from the small number of friends from whom he had still reason to hope for favours. His custom was to lie in bed the greatest part of the day, and to go out in the dark with the utmost privacy, and after having paid his visit return again before morning to his lodging, which was in the garret of an obscure inn.

Being thus excluded on one hand, and confined on the other, he suffered the utmost extremities of poverty, and often fasted so long that he was seized with faintness, and had lost his appetite, not being able to bear the smell of meat, till the action of his stomach was restored by a cordial.

In this distress he received a remittance of five pounds from London, with which he provided himself a decent coat, and determined to go to London, but unhappily spent his money at a favourite tavern. Thus was he again confined to Bristol, where he was every day hunted by bailiffs. In this exigence he once more found a friend, who sheltered him in his house, though at the usual inconveniences with which his company was attended; for he could neither be persuaded to go to bed in the night, nor to rise in the day.

It is observable, that in these various scenes of misery, he was always disengaged and cheerful: he

he at ſome times purſued his ſtudies, and at others continued or enlarged his epiſtolary correſpondence; nor was he ever ſo far dejected as to endeavour to procure an increaſe of his allowance by any other methods than accuſations and reproaches.

He had now no longer any hopes of aſſiſtance from his friends at Briſtol, who as merchants, and by conſequence ſufficiently ſtudious of profit, cannot be ſuppoſed to have looked with much compaſſion upon negligence and extravagance, or to think any excellence equivalent to a fault of ſuch conſequence as neglect of œconomy. It is natural to imagine, that many of thoſe, who would have relieved his real wants, were diſcouraged from the exertion of their benevolence by obſervation of the uſe which was made of their favours, and conviction that relief would only be momentary, and that the ſame neceſſity would quickly return.

At laſt he quitted the houſe of his friend, and returned to his lodging at the inn, ſtill intending to ſet out in a few days for London; but on the 10th of January 1742-3, having been at ſupper with two of his friends, he was at his return to his lodgings arreſted for a debt of about eight pounds, which he owed at a coffee-houſe, and conducted to the houſe of a ſheriff's officer. The account which he gives of this misfortune,

in a letter to one of the gentlemen with whom he had ſupped, is too remarkable to be omitted.

"It was not a little unfortunate for me, that "I ſpent yeſterday's evening with you; becauſe "the hour hindered me from entering on my "new lodging; however, I have now got one, "but ſuch an one, as I believe nobody would "chuſe.

"I was arreſted at the ſuit of Mrs. Read, juſt "as I was going up ſtairs to bed, at Mr. Bowyer's; "but taken in ſo private a manner, that I be-"lieve nobody at the White Lion is appriſed of "it. Though I let the officers know the ſtrength "(or rather weakneſs) of my pocket, yet they "treated me with the utmoſt civility; and even "when they conducted me to confinement, it was "in ſuch a manner, that I verily believe I could "have eſcaped, which I would rather be ruined "than have done, notwithſtanding the whole "amount of my finances was but three pence "halfpenny.

"In the firſt place I muſt inſiſt, that you will "induſtriouſly conceal this from Mrs. S——s, "becauſe I would not have her goodnature ſuffer "that pain, which, I know, ſhe would be apt "to feel on this occaſion.

"Next, I conjure you, dear Sir, by all the "ties of friendſhip, by no means to have one "uneaſy thought on my account; but to have "the ſame pleaſantry of countenance and un-

"ruffled

" ruffled ſerenity of mind, which (God be praiſ-
" ed!) I have in this, and have had in a much
" ſeverer calamity. Furthermore, I charge
" you, if you value my friendſhip as truly as I
" do yours, not to utter, or even harbour, the
" leaſt reſentment againſt Mrs. Read. I believe
" ſhe has ruined me, but I freely forgive her;
" and (though I will never more have any inti-
" macy with her) I would, at a due diſtance,
" rather do her an act of good, than ill will.
" Laſtly (pardon the expreſſion), I abſolutely
" command you not to offer me any pecuniary
" aſſiſtance, nor to attempt getting me any
" from any one of your friends. At another
" time, or on any other occaſion, you may,
" dear friend, be well aſſured, I would rather
" write to you in the ſubmiſſive ſtyle of a re-
" queſt, than that of a peremptory com-
" mand.

" However, that my truly valuable friend may
" not think I am too proud to aſk a favour,
" let me entreat you to let me have your boy
" to attend me for this day, not only for the
" ſake of ſaving me the expence of porters, but
" for the delivery of ſome letters to people
" whoſe names I would not have known to
" ſtrangers.

" The civil treatment I have thus far met
" from thoſe whoſe priſoner I am, makes me
" thankful to the Almighty, that, though he

" has thought fit to visit me (on my birth-
" night) with affliction, yet (such is his great
" goodness!) my affliction is not without alle-
" viating circumstances. I murmur not; but
" am all resignation to the divine will. As to
" the world, I hope that I shall be endued by
" heaven with that presence of mind, that se-
" rene dignity in misfortune, that constitutes
" the character of a true nobleman; a dignity
" far beyond that of coronets; a nobility arising
" from the just principles of philosophy, refined
" and exalted by those of christianity."——

He continued five days at the officer's, in hopes that he should be able to procure bail, and avoid the necessity of going to prison. The state in which he passed his time, and the treatment which he received, are very justly expressed by him in a letter which he wrote to a friend: " The whole day," says he, " has been em-
" ployed in various peoples' filling my head
" with their foolish chimerical systems, which
" has obliged me coolly (as far as nature will
" admit) to digest, and accommodate myself
" to, every different person's way of thinking;
" hurried from one wild system to another, till
" it has quite made a chaos of my imagination,
" and nothing done—promised—disappointed
" —ordered to send every hour, from one part
" of the town to the other."——

When

When his friends, who had hitherto careſſed and applauded, found that to give bail and pay the debt was the ſame, they all refuſed to preſerve him from a priſon, at the expence of eight pounds; and therefore, after having been for ſome time at the officer's houſe, "at an "immenſe expence," as he obſerves in his letter, he was at length removed to Newgate.

This expence he was enabled to ſupport by the generoſity of Mr. Naſh at Bath, who, upon receiving from him an account of his condition, immediately ſent him five guineas, and promiſed to promote his ſubſcription at Bath with all his intereſt.

By his removal to Newgate, he obtained at leaſt a freedom from ſuſpenſe, and reſt from the diſturbing viciſſitudes of hope and diſappointment; he now found that his friends were only companions, who were willing to ſhare his gaiety, but not to partake of his misfortunes; and therefore he no longer expected any aſſiſtance from them.

It muſt however be obſerved of one gentleman, that he offered to releaſe him by paying the debt, but that Mr. Savage would not conſent, I ſuppoſe becauſe he thought he had been before too burthenſome to him.

He was offered by ſome of his friends, that a collection ſhould be made for his enlargement;

but he "treated the propoſal," and declared, "he ſhould again treat it, with diſdain. As to "writing any mendicant letters, he had too "high a ſpirit, and determined only to write "to ſome miniſters of ſtate, to try to regain "his penſion."

He continued to complain of thoſe that had ſent him into the country, and objected to them, that he had "loſt the profits of his play which "had been finiſhed three years;" and in another letter declares his reſolution to publiſh a pamphlet, that the world might know how "he "had been uſed."

This pamphlet was never written; for he in a very ſhort time recovered his uſual tranquillity, and chearfully applied himſelf to more inoffenſive ſtudies. He indeed ſteadily declared, that he was promiſed a yearly allowance of fifty pounds, and never received half the ſum; but he ſeemed to reſign himſelf to that as well as to other misfortunes, and loſe the remembrance of it in his amuſements and employments.

The chearfulneſs with which he bore his confinement appears from the following letter, which he wrote, January the 30th, to one of his friends in London:

"I now write to you from my confinement "in Newgate, where I have been ever ſince "Monday laſt was ſe'en-night, and where I en-

"joy

"joy myſelf with much more tranquillity than "I have known for upwards of a twelvemonth "paſt; having a room entirely to myſelf, and "purſuing the amuſement of my poetical ſtu- "dies, uninterrupted, and agreeable to my "mind. I thank the Almighty, I am now all "collected in myſelf; and though my perſon "is in confinement, my mind can expatiate on "ample and uſeful ſubjects with all the free- "dom imaginable. I am now more converſant "with the Nine than ever; and if, inſtead of a "Newgate-bird, I may be allowed to be a bird "of the Muſes, I aſſure you, Sir, I ſing very "freely in my cage; ſometimes indeed in the "plaintive notes of the nightingale; but, at "others, in the chearful ſtrains of the lark."—

In another letter he obſerves, that he ranges from one ſubject to another, without confining himſelf to any particular taſk; and that he was employed one week upon one attempt, and the next upon another.

Surely the fortitude of this man deſerves, at leaſt, to be mentioned with applauſe; and, whatever faults may be imputed to him, the virtue of ſuffering well cannot be denied him. The two powers which, in the opinion of Epictetus, conſtituted a wiſe man, are thoſe of bearing and forbearing, which cannot indeed be affirmed to have been equally poſſeſſed by Savage;

vage; and indeed the want of one obliged him very frequently to practiſe the other.

He was treated by Mr. Dagg, the keeper of the priſon, with great humanity; was ſupported by him at his own table without any certainty of recompenſe; had a room to himſelf, to which he could at any time retire from all diſturbance; was allowed to ſtand at the door of the priſon, and ſometimes taken out into the fields; ſo that he ſuffered fewer hardſhips in priſon than he had been accuſtomed to undergo in the greateſt part of his life.

The keeper did not confine his benevolence to a gentle execution of his office, but made ſome overtures to the creditor for his releaſe, though without effect; and continued, during the whole time of his impriſonment, to treat him with the utmoſt tenderneſs and civility.

Virtue is undoubtedly moſt laudable in that ſtate which makes it moſt difficult; and therefore the humanity of a gaoler certainly deſerves this public atteſtation; and the man, whoſe heart has not been hardened by ſuch an employment, may be juſtly propoſed as a pattern of benevolence. If an inſcription was once engraved to the "honeſt toll-gatherer," leſs honours ought not to be paid "to the tender gaoler."

Mr. Savage very frequently received viſits, and ſometimes preſents, from his acquaintances;

but they did not amount to a ſubſiſtence, for the greater part of which he was indebted to the generoſity of this keeper; but theſe favours, however they might endear to him the particular perſons from whom he received them, were very far from impreſſing upon his mind any advantageous ideas of the people of Briſtol, and therefore he thought he could not more properly employ himſelf in priſon, than in writing a poem called "London and Briſtol deline-"ated."

When he had brought this poem to its preſent ſtate, which, without conſidering the chaſm, is not perfect, he wrote to London an account of his deſign, and informed his friend, that he was determined to print it with his name: but enjoined him not to communicate his intention to his Briſtol acquaintance. The gentleman, ſurprized at his reſolution, endeavoured to diſſuade him from publiſhing it, at leaſt from prefixing his name; and declared, that he could not reconcile the injunction of ſecreſy with his reſolution to own it at its firſt appearance. To this Mr. Savage returned an anſwer agreeable to his character in the following terms.

"I received yours this morning; and not "without a little ſurprize at the contents. To "anſwer a queſtion with a queſtion, you aſk "me concerning London and Briſtol, Why will

"I add delineated? Why did Mr. Woolaſton "add the ſame word to his RELIGION OF "NATURE? I ſuppoſe that it was his will and "pleaſure to add it in his caſe; and it is mine "to do ſo in my own. You are pleaſed to tell "me, that you underſtand not why ſecreſy is "enjoined, and yet I intend to ſet my name to "it. My anſwer is—I have my private reaſons, "which I am not obliged to explain to any one. "You doubt my friend Mr. S—— would not "approve of it—And what is it to me whether "he does or not? Do you imagine that Mr. "S—— is to dictate to me? If any man who "calls himſelf my friend ſhould aſſume ſuch an "air, I would ſpurn at his friendſhip with con-"tempt. You ſay I ſeem to think ſo by not "letting him know it—And ſuppoſe I do, what "then? Perhaps I can give reaſons for that "diſapprobation, very foreign from what you "would imagine. You go on in ſaying, Sup-"poſe I ſhould not put my name to it—My "anſwer is, that I will not ſuppoſe any ſuch "thing, being determined to the contrary: "neither, Sir, would I have you ſuppoſe, that "I applied to you for want of another preſs: "nor would I have you imagine, that I owe Mr. "S—— obligations which I do not."

Such was his imprudence, and ſuch his obſtinate adherence to his own reſolutions, however abſurd. A priſoner! ſupported by charity! and, whatever

whatever inſults he might have received during the latter part of his ſtay in Briſtol, once careſſed, eſteemed, and preſented with a liberal collection, he could forget on a ſudden his danger and his obligations, to gratify the petulance of his wit, or the eagerneſs of his reſentment, and publiſhed a ſatire, by which he might reaſonably expect, that he ſhould alienate thoſe who then ſupported him, and provoke thoſe whom he could neither reſiſt nor eſcape.

This reſolution, from the execution of which, it is probable, that only his death could have hindered him, is ſufficient to ſhew, how much he diſregarded all conſiderations that oppoſed his preſent paſſions, and how readily he hazarded all future advantages for any immediate gratifications. Whatever was his predominant inclination, neither hope nor fear hindered him from complying with it; nor had oppoſition any other effect than to heighten his ardour, and iritate his vehemence.

This performance was however laid aſide, while he was employed in ſoliciting aſſiſtance from ſeveral great perſons; and one interruption ſucceeding another, hindered him from ſupplying the chaſm, and perhaps from retouching the other parts, which he can hardly be imagined to have finiſhed, in his own opinion; for it is very unequal, and ſome of the lines are rather inſerted to rhyme to others, than to ſup-

port

port or improve the ſenſe; but the firſt and laſt parts are worked up with great ſpirit and elegance.

His time was ſpent in the priſon for the moſt part in ſtudy, or in receiving viſits; but ſometimes he deſcended to lower amuſements, and diverted himſelf in the kitchen with the converſation of the criminals; for it was not pleaſing to him to be much without company; and though he was very capable of a judicious choice, he was often contented with the firſt that offered: for this he was ſometimes reproved by his friends, who found him ſurrounded with felons; but the reproof was on that, as on other occaſions, thrown away; he continued to gratify himſelf, and to ſet very little value on the opinion of others.

But here, as in every other ſcene of his life, he made uſe of ſuch opportunities as occurred of benefiting thoſe who were more miſerable than himſelf, and was always ready to perform any offices of humanity to his fellow-priſoners.

He had now ceaſed from correſponding with any of his ſubſcribers except one, who yet continued to remit him the twenty pounds a year which he had promiſed him, and by whom it was expected, that he would have been in a very ſhort time enlarged, becauſe he had directed

rected the keeper to enquire after the ſtate of his debts.

However, he took care to enter his name according to the forms of the court, that the creditor might be obliged to make him ſome allowance, if he was continued a priſoner, and when on that occaſion he appeared in the hall was treated with very unuſual reſpect.

But the reſentment of the city was afterwards raiſed by ſome accounts that had been ſpread of the ſatire, and he was informed that ſome of the merchants intended to pay the allowance which the law required, and to detain him a priſoner at their own expence. This he treated as an empty menace; and perhaps might have haſtened the publication, only to ſhew how much he was ſuperior to their inſults, had not all his ſchemes been ſuddenly deſtroyed.

When he had been ſix months in priſon, he received from one of his friends *, in whoſe kindneſs he had the greateſt confidence, and on whoſe aſſiſtance he chiefly depended, a letter, that contained a charge of very atrocious ingratitude, drawn up in ſuch terms as ſudden reſentment dictated. Mr. Savage returned a very ſolemn proteſtation of his innocence, but however appeared much diſturbed at the accuſation. Some days afterwards he was ſeized with a pain

* Mr. Pope.

in

in his back and ſide, which, as it was not violent, was not ſuſpected to be dangerous; but growing daily more languid and dejected, on the 25th of July he confined himſelf to his room, and a fever ſeized his ſpirits. The ſymptoms grew every day more formidable, but his condition did not enable him to procure any aſſiſtance. The laſt time that the keeper ſaw him was on July the 31ſt*; when Savage, ſeeing him at his bed-ſide, ſaid, with an uncommon earneſtneſs, "I have ſomething to ſay to you, "Sir;" but, after a pauſe, moved his hand in a melancholy manner; and, finding himſelf unable to recollect what he was going to communicate, ſaid, "'Tis gone!" The keeper ſoon after left him; and the next morning he died. He was buried in the church-yard of St. Peter, at the expence of the keeper.

Such were the life and death of Richard Savage, a man equally diſtinguiſhed by his virtues and vices; and at once remarkable for his weakneſſes and abilities.

He was of a middle ſtature, of a thin habit of body, a long viſage, coarſe features, and melancholy aſpect; of a grave and manly deportment, a ſolemn dignity of mien; but which, upon a nearer acquaintance, ſoftened into an engaging eaſineſs of manners. His walk was

* In 1743.

ſlow,

ſlow, and his voice tremulous and mournful. He was eaſily excited to ſmiles, but very ſeldom provoked to laughter.

His mind was in an uncommon degree vigorous and active. His judgement was accurate, his apprehenſion quick, and his memory ſo tenacious, that he was frequently obſerved to know what he had learned from others in a ſhort time, better than thoſe by whom he was informed; and could frequently recollect incidents, with all their combination of circumſtances, which few would have regarded at the preſent time, but which the quickneſs of his apprehenſion impreſſed upon him. He had the peculiar felicity, that his attention never deſerted him; he was preſent to every object, and regardful of the moſt trifling occurrences. He had the art of eſcaping from his own reflections, and accommodating himſelf to every new ſcene.

To this quality is to be imputed the extent of his knowledge, compared with the ſmall time which he ſpent in viſible endeavours to acquire it. He mingled in curſory converſation with the ſame ſteadineſs of attention as others apply to a lecture; and, amidſt the appearance of thoughtleſs gaiety, loſt no new idea that was ſtarted, nor any hint that could be improved. He had therefore made in coffee-houſes the ſame proficiency as in other ſtudies; and it is remarkable, that the writings of a man of little education

education and little reading have an air of learning ſcarcely to be found in any other performances, but which perhaps as often obſcures as embelliſhes them.

His judgement was eminently exact both with regard to writings and to men. The knowledge of life was indeed his chief attainment; and it is not without ſome ſatisfaction, that I can produce the ſuffrage of Savage in favour of human nature, of which he never appeared to entertain ſuch odious ideas as ſome, who perhaps had neither his judgement nor experience, have publiſhed, either in oſtentation of their ſagacity, vindication of their crimes, or gratification of their malice.

His method of life particularly qualified him for converſation, of which he knew how to practiſe all the graces. He was never vehement or loud, but at once modeſt and eaſy, open and reſpectful; his language was vivacious and elegant, and equally happy upon grave or humorous ſubjects. He was generally cenſured for not knowing when to retire; but that was not the defect of his judgement, but of his fortune; when he left his company, he was frequently to ſpend the remaining part of the night in the ſtreet, or at leaſt was abandoned to gloomy reflections, which it is not ſtrange that he delayed as long as he could; and ſometimes forgot that he gave others pain to avoid it himſelf.

It

It cannot be ſaid, that he made uſe of his abilities for the direction of his own conduct: an irregular and diſſipated manner of life had made him the ſlave of every paſſion that happened to be excited by the preſence of its object, and that ſlavery to his paſſions reciprocally produced a life irregular and diſſipated. He was not maſter of his own motions, nor could promiſe any thing for the next day.

With regard to his œconomy, nothing can be added to the relation of his life: He appeared to think himſelf born to be ſupported by others, and diſpenſed from all neceſſity of providing for himſelf; he therefore never proſecuted any ſcheme of advantage, nor endeavoured even to ſecure the profits which his writings might have afforded him. His temper was, in conſequence of the dominion of his paſſions, uncertain and capricious; he was eaſily engaged, and eaſily diſguſted: but he is accuſed of retaining his hatred more tenaciouſly than his benevolence.

He was compaſſionate both by nature and principle, and always ready to perform offices of humanity; but when he was provoked (and very ſmall offences were ſufficient to provoke him), he would proſecute his revenge with the utmoſt acrimony till his paſſion had ſubſided.

His friendſhip was therefore of little value; for though he was zealous in the ſupport or vindication of thoſe whom he loved, yet it was always

ways dangerous to truſt him, becauſe he conſidered himſelf as diſcharged by the firſt quarrel from all ties of honour or gratitude; and would betray thoſe ſecrets which, in the warmth of confidence, had been imparted to him. This practice drew upon him an univerſal accuſation of ingratitude: nor can it be denied that he was very ready to ſet himſelf free from the load of an obligation; for he could not bear to conceive himſelf in a ſtate of dependence, his pride being equally powerful with his other paſſions, and appearing in the form of inſolence at one time, and of vanity at another. Vanity, the moſt innocent ſpecies of pride, was moſt frequently predominant: He could not eaſily leave off, when he had once begun to mention himſelf, or his works; nor ever read his verſes without ſtealing his eyes from the page, to diſcover, in the faces of his audience, how they were affected with any favourite paſſage.

A kinder name than that of vanity ought to be given to the delicacy with which he was always careful to ſeparate his own merit from every other man's, and to reject that praiſe to which he had no claim. He did not forget, in mentioning his performances, to mark every line that had been ſuggeſted or amended; and was ſo accurate, as to relate that he owed three words in THE WANDERER to the advice of his friends.

His

His veracity was queſtioned, but with little reaſon; his accounts, though not indeed always the ſame, were generally conſiſtent. When he loved any man, he ſuppreſſed all his faults; and, when he had been offended by him, concealed all his virtues: But his characters were generally true, ſo far as he proceeded; though it cannot be denied, that his partiality might have ſometimes the effect of falſehood.

In caſes indifferent he was zealous for virtue, truth, and juſtice: he knew very well the neceſſity of goodneſs to the preſent and future happineſs of mankind; nor is there perhaps any writer, who has leſs endeavoured to pleaſe by flattering the appetites, or perverting the judgement.

As an author, therefore, and he now ceaſes to influence mankind in any other character, if one piece which he had reſolved to ſuppreſs be excepted, he has very little to fear from the ſtricteſt moral or religious cenſure. And though he may not be altogether ſecure againſt the objections of the critic, it muſt however be acknowledged, that his works are the productions of a genius truly poetical; and, what many writers who have been more laviſhly applauded cannot boaſt, that they have an original air, which has no reſemblance of any foregoing writer; that the verſification and ſentiments have a caſt peculiar to themſelves, which no man can imitate with

ſucceſs, becauſe what was nature in Savage, would in another be affectation. It muſt be confeſſed, that his deſcriptions are ſtriking, his images animated, his fictions juſtly imagined, and his allegories artfully purſued; that his diction is elevated, though ſometimes forced, and his numbers ſonorous and majeſtic, though frequently ſluggiſh and encumbered. Of his ſtyle, the general fault is harſhneſs, and its general excellence is dignity; of his ſentiments, the prevailing beauty is ſublimity, and uniformity the prevailing defect.

For his life, or for his writings, none, who candidly conſider his fortune, will think an apology either neceſſary or difficult. If he was not always ſufficiently inſtructed in his ſubject, his knowledge was at leaſt greater than could have been attained by others in the ſame ſtate. If his works were ſometimes unfiniſhed, accuracy cannot reaſonably be exacted from a man oppreſſed with want, which he has no hope of relieving but by a ſpeedy publication. The inſolence and reſentment of which he is accuſed were not eaſily to be avoided by a great mind, irritated by perpetual hardſhips, and conſtrained hourly to return the ſpurns of contempt, and repreſs the inſolence of proſperity; and vanity may ſurely readily be pardoned in him, to whom life afforded no other comforts than barren praiſes, and the conſciouſneſs of deſerving them.

Thoſe

Thoſe are no proper judges of his conduct, who have ſlumbered away their time on the down of affluence; nor will any wiſe man preſume to ſay, "Had I been in Savage's condi-"tion, I ſhould have lived or written better "than Savage."

This relation will not be wholly without its uſe, if thoſe, who languiſh under any part of his ſufferings, ſhall be enabled to fortify their patience, by reflecting that they feel only thoſe afflictions from which the abilities of Savage did not exempt him; or thoſe, who, in confidence of ſuperior capacities or attainments, diſregard the common maxims of life, ſhall be reminded, that nothing will ſupply the want of prudence; and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge uſeleſs, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible.

SOMERVILE.

OF Mr. SOMERVILE's life I am not able to ſay any thing that can ſatisfy curioſity.

He was a gentleman whoſe eſtate was in Warwickſhire; his houſe is called Edſton, a ſeat inherited from a long line of anceſtors; for he was ſaid to be of the firſt family in his county. He tells of himſelf, that he was born near the Avon's banks. He was bred at Wineheſter-ſchool, but I know not whether he was of any univerſity. I have never

heard of him but as of a poet, a country gentleman, and a ſkilful and uſeful Juſtice of the Peace.

Of the cloſe of his life, thoſe whom his poems have delighted will read with pain the following account, copied from the Letters of his friend Shenſtone, by whom he was too much reſembled.

" —Our old friend Somervile is " dead! I did not imagine I could have " been ſo ſorry as I find myſelf on this " occaſion.—*Sublatum quærimus.* I can " now excuſe all his foibles; impute " them to age, and to diſtreſs of cir- " cumſtances: the laſt of theſe conſi- " derations wrings my very ſoul to think " on. For a man of high ſpirit, con- " ſcious of having (at leaſt in one pro- " duction)

"duction) generally pleaſed the world,
"to be plagued and threatened by
"wretches that are low in every ſenſe;
"to be forced to drink himſelf into
"pains of the body, in order to get
"rid of the pains of the mind, is a
"miſery."—He died July 14, 1743.

It is with regret that I find myſelf not better enabled to exhibit memorials of a writer, who at leaſt muſt be allowed to have ſet a good example to men of his own claſs, by devoting part of his time to elegant knowledge; and who has ſhewn, by the ſubjects which his poetry has adorned, that it is practicable to be at once a ſkilful ſportſman and a man of letters.

The compilers of this collection have neglected the order of time, and placed thoſe pieces firſt which were written laſt. The Occaſional Poems were publiſhed long before his *Chaſe*.

Somervile has tried many modes of poetry; and though perhaps he has not in any reached ſuch excellence as to raiſe much envy, it may commonly be ſaid at leaſt, that *he writes very well for a gentleman*. His ſerious pieces are ſometimes elevated, and his trifles are ſometimes elegant. In his verſes to Addiſon the couplet which mentions *Clio* is written with the moſt exquiſite delicacy of praiſe; it exhibits one of thoſe happy ſtrokes that are ſeldom attained. In his Odes to Marlborough there are beauti-

ful lines; but in the ſecond Ode he ſhews that he knew little of his hero, when he talks of his private virtues. His ſubjects are ſuch as require no great depth of thought or energy of expreſſion. His Fables are generally ſtale, and therefore excite no curioſity. Of his favourite, *The Two Springs*, the fiction is unnatural, and the moral inconſequential. In his Tales there is too much coarſeneſs, with too little care of language, and not ſufficient rapidity of narration.

His great work is his *Chaſe*, which he undertook in his maturer age, when his ear was improved to the approbation of blank verſe, of which however his two firſt lines give a bad ſpecimen.

To

To this poem praiſe cannot be totally denied. He is allowed by ſportſmen to write with great intelligence of his ſubject, which is the firſt requiſite to excellence; and though it is impoſſible to intereſt the common readers of verſe in the dangers or pleaſures of the chaſe, he has done all that tranſition and variety could eaſily effect; and has, with great propriety, enlarged his plan by the modes of hunting uſed in other countries.

With ſtill leſs judgement did he chuſe blank verſe as the vehicle of *Rural Sports*. If blank verſe be not tumid and gorgeous, it is crippled proſe; and familiar images in laboured language have nothing to recommend them

them but abſurd novelty, which wanting the attractions of Nature, cannot pleaſe long. One excellence of the *Splendid Shilling* is, that it is ſhort. Diſguiſe can gratify no longer than it deceives.

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THOMSON.

JAMES THOMSON, the ſon of a miniſter well eſteemed for his piety and diligence, was born September 7, 1700, at Ednam, in the ſhire of Roxburgh, of which his father was paſtor. His mother, whoſe name was Hume, inherited as co-heireſs a portion of a ſmall eſtate. The revenue of a pariſh in Scotland is ſeldom large; and it was probably in commiſeration of the difficulty with which Mr. Thomſon ſupported his family, having nine children,

that Mr. Riccarton, a neighbouring miniſter, diſcovering in James uncommon promiſes of future excellence, undertook to ſuperintend his education, and provide him books.

He was taught the common rudiments of learning at the ſchool of Jedburg, a place which he delights to recollect in his poem of *Autumn*; but was not conſidered by his maſter as ſuperior to common boys, though in thoſe early days he amuſed his patron and his friends with poetical compoſitions; with which however he ſo little pleaſed himſelf, that on every new-year's day he threw into the fire all the productions of the foregoing year.

From

From ſchool he was removed to Edinburgh, where he had not reſided two years when his father died, and left all his children to the care of their mother, who raiſed upon her little eſtate what money a mortgage could afford, and, removing with her family to Edinburgh, lived to ſee her ſon riſing into eminence.

The deſign of Thomſon's friends was to breed him a miniſter. He lived at Edinburgh, as at ſchool, without diſtinction or expectation, till, at the uſual time, he performed a probationary exerciſe by explaining a pſalm. His diction was ſo poetically ſplendid, that Mr. Hamilton, the profeſſor of Divinity, reproved him for ſpeaking language unintelligible

intelligible to a popular audience, and he cenſured one of his expreſſions as indecent, if not profane.

This rebuke is reported to have repreſſed his thoughts of an eccleſiaſtical character, and he probably cultivated with new diligence his bloſſoms of poetry, which however were in ſome danger of a blaſt; for, ſubmitting his productions to ſome who thought themſelves qualified to criticiſe, he heard of nothing but faults, but, finding other judges more favourable, he did not ſuffer himſelf to ſink into deſpondence.

He eaſily diſcovered that the only ſtage on which a poet could appear, with any hope of advantage, was London; a place too wide for the operation

of petty competition and private malignity, where merit might ſoon become conſpicuous, and would find friends as ſoon as it became reputable to befriend it. A lady, who was acquainted with his mother, adviſed him to the journey, and promiſed ſome countenance or aſſiſtance, which at laſt he never received; however he juſtified his adventure by her encouragement, and came to ſeek in London patronage and fame.

At his arrival he found his way to Mr. Mallet, then tutor to the ſons of the duke of Montroſe. He had recommendations to ſeveral perſons of conſequence, which he had tied up carefully in his handkerchief; but as he paſſed along the ſtreet, with the gaping curioſity of

a new-comer, his attention was upon every thing rather than his pocket, and his magazine of credentials was ſtolen from him.

His firſt want was of a pair of ſhoes. For the ſupply of all his neceſſities, his whole fund was his *Winter*, which for a time could find no purchaſer; till, at laſt, Mr. Millan was perſuaded to buy it at a low price; and this low price he had for ſome time reaſon to regret; but, by accident, Mr. Whatley, a man not wholly unknown among authors, happening to turn his eye upon it, was ſo delighted that he ran from place to place celebrating its excellence. Thomſon obtained likewiſe the notice of Aaron Hill, whom, being friendleſs and indi-

indigent, and glad of kindneſs, he courted with every expreſſion of ſervile adulation.

Winter was dedicated to Sir Spencer Compton, but attracted no regard from him to the author; till Aaron Hill awakened his attention by ſome verſes addreſſed to Thomſon, and publiſhed in one of the newſpapers, which cenſured the great for their neglect of ingenious men. Thomſon then received a preſent of twenty guineas, of which he gives this account to Mr. Hill:

"I hinted to you in my laſt, that on "Saturday morning I was with Sir "Spencer Compton. A certain gentle-

" man, without my desire, spoke to him
" concerning me; his answer was, that
" I had never come near him. Then
" the gentleman put the question, If he
" desired that I should wait on him? he
" returned, he did. On this, the gen-
" tleman gave me an introductory Let-
" ter to him. He received me in what
" they commonly call a civil manner;
" asked me some common-place ques-
" tions, and made me a present of
" twenty guineas. I am very ready to
" own that the present was larger than
" my performance deserved; and shall
" ascribe it to his generosity, or any
" other cause, rather than the merit of
" the address."

The

The poem, which, being of a new kind, few would venture at firſt to like, by degrees gained upon the publick; and one edition was very ſpeedily ſucceeded by another.

Thomſon's credit was now high, and every day brought him new friends; among others Dr. Rundle, a man afterwards unfortunately famous, ſought his acquaintance, and found his qualities ſuch, that he recommended him to the lord chancellor Talbot.

Winter was accompanied, in many editions, not only with a preface and a dedication, but with poetical praiſes by Mr. Hill, Mr. Mallet (then *Malloch*), and *Mira*, the fictitious name of a lady once

too

too well known. Why the dedications are, to *Winter* and the other ſeaſons, contrarily to cuſtom, left out in the collected works, the reader may enquire.

The next year (1727) he diſtinguiſhed himſelf by three publications; of *Summer*, in purſuance of his plan; of *a Poem on the Death of Sir Iſaac Newton*, which he was enabled to perform as an exact philoſopher by the inſtruction of Mr. Gray; and of *Britannia*, a kind of poetical invective againſt the miniſtry, whom the nation then thought not forward enough in reſenting the depredations of the Spaniards. By this piece he declared himſelf an adherent to the oppo-

 ſition,

ſition, and had therefore no favour to expect from the Court.

Thomſon, having been ſome time entertained in the family of the lord Binning, was deſirous of teſtifying his gratitude by making him the patron of his *Summer*; but the ſame kindneſs which had firſt diſpoſed lord Binning to encourage him, determined him to refuſe the dedication, which was by his advice addreſſed to Mr. Doddington; a man who had more power to advance the reputation and fortune of a poet.

Spring was publiſhed next year, with a dedication to the counteſs of Hertford; whoſe practice it was to invite every Summer ſome poet into the country,

try, to hear her verſes, and aſſiſt her ſtudies. This honour was one Summer conferred on Thomſon, who took more delight in carouſing with lord Hertford and his friends than aſſiſting her ladyſhip's poetical operations, and therefore never received another ſummons.

Autumn, the ſeaſon to which the *Spring* and *Summer* are preparatory, ſtill remained unſung, and was delayed till he publiſhed (1730) his works collected.

He produced in 1727 the tragedy of *Sophoniſba*, which raiſed ſuch expectation, that every rehearſal was dignified with a ſplendid audience, collected to anticipate the delight that was preparing for the publick. It was obſerved how-

however that nobody was much affected, and that the company roſe as from a moral lecture.

It had upon the ſtage no unuſual degree of ſucceſs. Slight accidents will operate upon the taſte of pleaſure. There was a feeble line in the play;

O Sophoniſba, Sophoniſba, O!

This gave occaſion to a waggiſh parody;

O, Jemmy Thomſon, Jemmy Thomſon, O!

which for a while was echoed through the town.

I have been told by Savage, that of the Prologue to *Sophoniſba* the firſt part was written by Pope, who could not be per-

perſuaded to finiſh it, and that the concluding lines were added by Mallet.

Thomſon was not long afterwards, by the influence of Dr. Rundle, ſent to travel with Mr. Charles Talbot, the eldeſt ſon of the Chancellor. He was yet young enough to receive new impreſſions, to have his opinions rectified, and his views enlarged; nor can he be ſuppoſed to have wanted that curioſity which is inſeparable from an active and comprehenſive mind. He may therefore now be ſuppoſed to have revelled in all the joys of intellectual luxury; he was every day feaſted with inſtructive novelties; he lived ſplendidly without expence, and might expect when he returned home a certain eſtabliſhment.

At

At this time a long courſe of oppoſition to Sir Robert Walpole had filled the nation with clamours for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty, which was not in danger. Thomſon, in his travels on the continent, found or fancied ſo many evils ariſing from the tyranny of other governments, that he reſolved to write a very long poem, in five parts, upon Liberty.

While he was buſy on the firſt book, Mr. Talbot died; and Thomſon, who had been rewarded for his attendance by the place of ſecretary of the Briefs, pays in the initial lines a decent tribute to his memory.

Upon this great poem two years were ſpent, and the author congratulated himſelf upon it as his nobleſt work; but an author and his reader are not always of a mind. *Liberty* called in vain upon her votaries to read her praiſes and reward her encomiaſt: her praiſes were condemned to harbour ſpiders, and to gather duſt; none of Thomſon's performances were ſo little regarded.

The judgement of the publick was not erroneous; the recurrence of the ſame images muſt tire in time; an enumeration of examples to prove a poſition which nobody denied, as it was from the beginning ſuperfluous, muſt quickly grow diſguſting.

The

The poem of *Liberty* does not now appear in its original ſtate; but when the author's works were collected, after his death, was ſhortened by Sir George Lyttelton, with a liberty which, as it has a manifeſt tendency to leſſen the confidence of ſociety, and to confound the characters of authors, by making one man write by the judgement of another, cannot be juſtified by any ſuppoſed propriety of the alteration, or kindneſs of the friend.—I wiſh it had been exhibited in this Collection as its author left it.

Thomſon now lived in eaſe and plenty, and ſeems for a while to have ſuſpended his poetry; but he was ſoon called back to labour by the death of

the Chancellor, for his place then became vacant; and though the lord Hardwicke delayed for ſome time to give it away, Thomſon's baſhfulneſs, or pride, or ſome other motive perhaps not more laudable, withheld him from ſoliciting; and the new Chancellor would not give him what he would not aſk.

He now relapſed to his former indigence; but the prince of Wales was at that time ſtruggling for popularity, and by the influence of Mr. Lyttelton profeſſed himſelf the patron of wit: to him Thomſon was introduced, and being gaily interrogated about the ſtate of his affairs, ſaid, *that they were in a more poetical poſture than formerly*; and had a pen-

penſion allowed him of one hundred pounds a year.

Being now obliged to write, he produced (1738) the tragedy of *Agamemnon*, which was much ſhortened in the repreſentation. It had the fate which moſt commonly attends mythological ſtories, and was only endured, but not favoured. It ſtruggled with ſuch difficulty through the firſt night, that Thomſon, coming late to his friends with whom he was to ſup, excuſed his delay by telling them how the ſweat of his diſtreſs had ſo diſordered his wig, that he could not come till he had been refitted by a barber.

He ſo intereſted himſelf in his own drama, that, if I remember right, as he

ſat in the upper gallery he accompanied the players by audible recitation, till a friendly hint frighted him to ſilence. Pope countenanced *Agamemnon*, by coming to it the firſt night.

About this time the Act was paſſed for licenſing plays, of which the firſt operation was the prohibition of *Guſtavus Vaſa*, a tragedy of Mr. Brooke, whom the publick recompenſed by a very liberal ſubſcription; the next was the refuſal of *Edward and Eleonora*, offered by Thomſon. It is hard to diſcover why either play ſhould have been obſtructed. Thomſon likewiſe endeavoured to repair his loſs by a ſubſcription, of which I cannot now tell the ſucceſs.

When

When the publick murmured at the unkind treatment of Thomſon, one of the miniſterial writers remarked, that *he had taken a* Liberty *which was not agreeable to* Britannia *in any* Seaſon.

He was ſoon after employed, in conjunction with Mr. Mallet, to write the maſque of *Alfred*, which was acted before the Prince at Cliefden-houſe.

His next work (1745) was *Tancred and Sigiſmunda*, the moſt ſucceſsful of all his tragedies; for it ſtill keeps its turn upon the ſtage. He ſeems not to be, either by the bent of nature or habits of ſtudy, much qualified for tragedy. It does not appear that he had much ſenſe of the pathetick, and his

diffuſive and deſcriptive ſtile produced declamation rather than dialogue.

His friend Mr. Lyttelton was now in power, and conferred upon him the office of ſurveyor-general of the Leeward Iſlands; from which, when his deputy was paid, he received about three hundred pounds a year.

The laſt piece that he lived to publiſh was the *Caſtle of Indolence*, which was many years under his hand, but was at laſt finiſhed with great accuracy. The firſt canto opens a ſcene of lazy luxury, that fills the imagination.

He was now at eaſe, but was not long to enjoy it; for, by taking cold on the water between London and Kew, he caught a diſorder, which, with ſome care-

careleſs exaſperation, ended in a fever that put an end to his life, Auguſt 27, 1748. He was buried in the church of Richmond, without an inſcription; but a monument has been erected to his memory in Weſtminſter-abbey.

Thomſon was of ſtature above the middle ſize, and *more fat than bard beſeems*, of a dull countenance, and a groſs, unanimated, uninviting appearance; ſilent in mingled company, but chearful among ſelect friends, and by his friends very tenderly and warmly beloved.

He left behind him the tragedy of *Coriolanus*, which was, by the zeal of his patron Sir George Lyttelton, brought upon the ſtage for the benefit of his

ſamily, and recommended by a Prologue, which Quin, who had long lived with Thomſon in fond intimacy, ſpoke in ſuch a manner as ſhewed him *to be*, on that occaſion, *no actor*. The commencement of this benevolence is very honourable to Quin; who is reported to have delivered Thomſon, then known to him only for his genius, from an arreſt, by a very conſiderable preſent; and its continuance is honourable to both; for friendſhip is not always the ſequel of obligation. By this tragedy a conſiderable ſum was raiſed, of which part diſcharged his debts, and the reſt was remitted to his ſiſters, whom, however removed from them by place or condition, he regarded with great tenderneſs,

as

as will appear by the following Letter, which I communicate with much pleaſure, as it gives me at once an opportunity of recording the fraternal kindneſs of Thomſon, and reflecting on the friendly aſſiſtance of Mr. Boſwell, from whom I received it.

" Hagley in Worceſterſhire,
" October the 4th, 1747.

" My dear Siſter,

" I thought you had known me bet-
" ter than to interpret my ſilence into a
" decay of affection, eſpecially as your
" behaviour has always been ſuch as
" rather to increaſe than diminiſh it.
" Don't imagine, becauſe I am a bad
" correſpondent, that I can ever prove

" an unkind friend and brother. I muſt
" do myſelf the juſtice to tell you, that
" my affections are naturally very fixed
" and conſtant; and if I had ever rea-
" ſon of complaint againſt you (of which
" by the bye I have not the leaſt ſha-
" dow), I am conſcious of ſo many de-
" fects in myſelf, as diſpoſe me to be
" not a little charitable and forgiving.

" It gives me the trueſt heart-felt
" ſatisfaction to hear you have a good
" kind huſband, and are in eaſy con-
" tented circumſtances; but were they
" otherwiſe, that would only awaken
" and heighten my tenderneſs towards
" you. As our good and tender-hearted
" parents did not live to receive any
" material teſtimonies of that higheſt

" human

" human gratitude I owed them (than
" which nothing could have given me
" equal pleaſure), the only return I can
" make them now is by kindneſs to
" thoſe they left behind them: would
" to God poor Lizy had lived longer,
" to have been a farther witneſs of the
" truth of what I ſay, and that I might
" have had the pleaſure of ſeeing once
" more a ſiſter, who ſo truly deſerved
" my eſteem and love. But ſhe is hap-
" py, while we muſt toil a little longer
" here below: let us however do it
" chearfully and gratefully, ſupported
" by the pleaſing hope of meeting yet
" again on a ſafer ſhore, where to recol-
" lect the ſtorms and difficulties of life
" will not perhaps be inconſiſtent with

" that

" that bliſsful ſtate. You did right to
" call your daughter by her name; for
" you muſt needs have had a particular
" tender friendſhip for one another, en-
" deared as you were by nature, by
" having paſt the affectionate years of
" your youth together; and by that
" great ſoftner and engager of hearts,
" mutual hardſhip. That it was in my
" power to eaſe it a little, I account one
" of the moſt exquiſite pleaſures of my
" life.—But enough of this melancholy
" though not unpleaſing ſtrain.

" I eſteem you for your ſenſible and
" diſintereſted advice to Mr. Bell, as
" you will ſee by my Letter to him: as
" I approve intirely of his marrying
" again, you may readily aſk me why I
" don't

" don't marry at all. My circumſtances
" have hitherto been ſo variable and un-
" certain in this fluctuating world, as
" induce to keep me from engaging in
" ſuch a ſtate: and now, though they
" are more ſettled, and of late (which
" you will be glad to hear) conſiderably
" improved, I begin to think myſelf
" too far advanced in life for ſuch
" youthful undertakings, not to men-
" tion ſome other petty reaſons that are
" apt to ſtartle the delicacy of difficult
" old batchelors. I am, however, not
" a little ſuſpicious that was I to pay
" a viſit to Scotland (of which I have
" ſome thoughts of doing ſoon) I might
" poſſibly be tempted to think of a
" thing not eaſily repaired, if done amiſs.

" I have

"I have always been of opinion that "none make better wives than the la- "dies of Scotland; and yet, who more "forſaken than they, while the gentle- "men are continually running abroad "all the world over? Some of them, "it is true, are wiſe enough to return "for a wife. You ſee I am beginning "to make intereſt already with the Scots "ladies.—But no more of this infectious "ſubject.—Pray let me hear from you "now-and-then; and though I am not "a regular correſpondent, yet perhaps "I may mend in that reſpect. Remem- "ber me kindly to your huſband, and "believe me to be,

"Your moſt affectionate brother,

(Signed) "JAMES THOMSON."

(Addreſſed) "To Mrs. Thomſon in Lanark."

The benevolence of Thomſon was fervid, but not active; he would give, on all occaſions, what aſſiſtance his purſe would ſupply; but the offices of intervention or ſolicitation he could not conquer his ſluggiſhneſs ſufficiently to perform. The affairs of others, however, were not more neglected than his own. He had often felt the inconveniences of idleneſs, but he never cured it; and was ſo conſcious of his own character, that he talked of writing an Eaſtern Tale of *the Man who loved to be in Diſtreſs.*

Among his peculiarities was a very unſkilful and inarticulate manner of pronouncing any lofty or ſolemn compoſition. He was once reading to Doddington, who, being himſelf a reader eminently ele-

elegant, was ſo much provoked by his odd utterance, that he ſnatched the paper from his hand, and told him that he did not underſtand his own verſes.

The biographer of Thomſon has remarked, that an author's Life is beſt read in his works: his obſervation was not well-timed. Savage, who lived much with Thomſon, once told me, how he heard a lady remarking that ſhe could gather from his works three parts of his character, that he was a *great Lover*, *a great Swimmer*, and *rigorouſly abſtinent*; but, ſaid Savage, he knows not any love but that of the ſex; he was perhaps never in cold water in his life; and he indulges himſelf in all the luxury that comes within his reach. Yet Savage

always

always ſpoke with the moſt eager praiſe of his ſocial qualities, his warmth and conſtancy of friendſhip, and his adherence to his firſt acquaintance when the advancement of his reputation had left them behind him.

As a writer, he is entitled to one praiſe of the higheſt kind; his mode of thinking, and of expreſſing his thoughts, is original. His blank verſe is no more the blank verſe of Milton, or of any other poet, than the rhymes of Prior are the rhymes of Cowley. His numbers, his pauſes, his diction, are of his own growth, without tranſcription, without imitation. He thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on Nature and

on Life, with the eye which Nature beſtows only on a poet; the eye that diſtinguiſhes, in every thing preſented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vaſt, and attends to the minute. The reader of the *Seaſons* wonders that he never ſaw before what Thomſon ſhews him, and that he never yet has felt what Thomſon impreſſes.

His is one of the works in which blank verſe ſeems properly uſed; Thomſon's wide expanſion of general views, and his enumeration of circumſtantial varieties, would have been obſtructed and embarraſſed by the frequent inter-

ſections of the ſenſe, which are the neceſſary effects of rhyme.

His deſcriptions of extended ſcenes and general effects bring before us the whole magnificence of Nature, whether pleaſing or dreadful. The gaiety of *Spring*, the ſplendour of *Summer*, the tranquillity of *Autumn*, and the horror of *Winter*, take in their turns poſſeſſion of the mind. The poet leads us through the appearances of things as they are ſucceſſively varied by the viciſſitudes of the year, and imparts to us ſo much of his own enthuſiaſm, that our thoughts expand with his imagery, and kindle with his ſentiments. Nor is the naturaliſt without his part in the entertainment; for he is aſſiſted to recollect and

to combine, to arrange his diſcoveries, and to amplify the ſphere of his contemplation.

The great defect of the *Seaſons* is want of method; but for this I know not that there was any remedy. Of many appearances ſubſiſting all at once, no rule can be given why one ſhould be mentioned before another; yet the memory wants the help of order, and the curioſity is not excited by ſuſpenſe or expectation.

His diction is in the higheſt degree florid and luxuriant, ſuch as may be ſaid to be to his images and thoughts *both their luſtre and their ſhade*; ſuch as inveſts them with ſplendour, through-

which

which perhaps they are not always eaſily diſcerned. It is too exuberant, and ſometimes may be charged with filling the ear more than the mind.

Theſe Poems, with which I was acquainted at their firſt appearance, I have ſince found altered and enlarged by ſubſequent reviſals, as the author ſuppoſed his judgement to grow more exact, and as books or converſation extended his knowledge and opened his proſpects. They are, I think, improved in general; yet I know not whether they have not loſt part of what Temple calls their *race*; a word which, applied to wines, in its primitive ſenſe, means the flavour of the ſoil.

Liber-

Liberty, when it firſt appeared, I tried to read, and ſoon deſiſted. I have never tried again, and therefore will not hazard either praiſe or cenſure.

PRO-

PROLOGUE TO SOPHONISBA,

By Pope and Mallet.

WHEN Learning, after the long Gothic night,
Fair, o'er the Weſtern world, renew'd its light,
With arts ariſing, Sophoniſba roſe:
The Tragic Muſe, returning, wept her woes.
With her th' Italian ſcene firſt learn'd to glow;
And the firſt tears for her were taught to flow.
Her charms the Gallic Muſes next inſpir'd:
Corneille himſelf ſaw, wonder'd, and was fir'd.
What foreign theatres with pride have ſhewn,
Britain, by juſter title, makes her own.
When Freedom is the cauſe, 'tis hers to fight;
And hers, when Freedom is the theme, to write.
For this a Britiſh Author bids again
The heroine riſe, to grace the Britiſh ſcene.

Here,

Here, as in life, ſhe breathes her genuine flame:
She aſks, what boſom has not felt the ſame?
Aſks of the Britiſh Youth—Is ſilence there?
She dares to aſk it of the Britiſh Fair.

To-night, our home-ſpun author would be true,
At once, to nature, hiſtory, and you.
Well-pleas'd to give our neighbours due applauſe,
He owns their learning, but diſdains their laws.
Not to his patient touch, or happy flame,
'Tis to his Britiſh heart he truſts for fame.
If France excel him in one free-born thought,
The man, as well as poet, is in fault.

Nature! informer of the poet's art,
Whoſe force alone can raiſe or melt the heart,
Thou art his guide; each paſſion, every line,
Whate'er he draws to pleaſe, muſt all be thine.
Be thou his judge: in every candid breaſt,
Thy ſilent whiſper is the ſacred teſt.

4 AP 54

HAMMOND.

OF Mr. HAMMOND, though he be well remembered as a man eſteemed and careſſed by the elegant and great, I was at firſt able to obtain no other memorials than ſuch as are ſupplied by a book called *Cibber's Lives of the Poets*; of which I take this opportunity to teſtify that it was not written, nor, I believe, ever ſeen, by either of the Cibbers; but was the work of Robert Shiels, a native of Scotland, a man of very acute underſtanding, though with

A little

little ſcholaſtick education, who, not long after the publication of his work, died in London of a conſumption. His life was virtuous, and his end was pious. Theophilus Cibber, then a priſoner for debt, imparted, as I was told, his name for ten guineas. The manuſcript of Shiels is now in my poſſeſſion.

I have ſince found that Mr. Shiels, though he was no negligent enquirer, has been miſled by falſe accounts; for he relates that James Hammond, the author of the following Elegies, was the ſon of a Turkey merchant, and had ſome office at the prince of Wales's court, till love of a lady, whoſe name was Daſhwood, for a time diſordered his underſtanding. He was unex-

unextinguiſhably amorous, and his miſtreſs inexorably cruel.

Of this narrative part is true, and part falſe. He was the ſecond ſon of Anthony Hammond, a man of note among the wits, poets, and parliamentary orators in the beginning of this century, who was allied to Sir Robert Walpole by marrying his ſiſter. He was born about 1710, and educated at Weſtminſter-ſchool; but it does not appear that he was of any univerſity. He was equerry to the prince of Wales, and ſeems to have come very early into publick notice, and to have been diſtinguiſhed by thoſe whoſe patronage and friendſhip prejudiced mankind at that time in favour of thoſe on

whom they were beſtowed; for he was the companion of Cobham, Lyttelton, and Cheſterfield. He is ſaid to have divided his life between pleaſure and books; in his retirement forgetting the town, and in his gaiety loſing the ſtudent. Of his literary hours all the effects are here exhibited, of which the Elegies were written very early, and the Prologue not long before his death.

In 1741, he was choſen into parliament for Truro in Cornwall, probably one of thoſe who were elected by the Prince's influence; and died next year in June at Stowe, the famous ſeat of the lord Cobham. His miſtreſs long outlived him, and in 1779 died unmarried. The character which her lover be-

queathed her was, indeed, not likely to attract courtſhip.

The Elegies were publiſhed after his death; and while the writer's name was remembered with fondneſs, they were read with a reſolution to admire them. The recommendatory preface of the editor, who was then believed, and is now affirmed by Dr. Maty, to be the earl of Cheſterfield, raiſed ſtrong prejudices in their favour.

But of the prefacer, whoever he was, it may be reaſonably ſuſpected that he never read the poems; for he profeſſes to value them for a very high ſpecies of excellence, and recommends them as the genuine effuſions of the mind, which expreſs a real paſſion in the language of

nature. But the truth is, these elegies have neither passion, nature, nor manners. Where there is fiction, there is no passion; he that describes himself as a shepherd, and his Neæra or Delia as a shepherdess, and talks of goats and lambs, feels no passion. He that courts his mistress with Roman imagery deserves to lose her; for she may with good reason suspect his sincerity. Hammond has few sentiments drawn from nature, and few images from modern life. He produces nothing but frigid pedantry. It would be hard to find in all his productions three stanzas that deserve to be remembered.

Like

Like other lovers, he threatens the lady with dying, and what then ſhall follow?

Wilt thou in tears thy lover's corſe attend;
With eyes averted light the ſolemn pyre,
Till all around the doleful flames aſcend,
Then, ſlowly ſinking, by degrees expire?
To ſooth the hovering ſoul be thine the care,
With plaintive cries to lead the mournful band.
In ſable weeds the golden vaſe to bear,
And cull my aſhes with thy trembling hand:
Panchaia's odours be their coſtly feaſt,
And all the pride of Aſia's fragrant year,
Give them the treaſures of the fartheſt Eaſt,
And, what is ſtill more precious, give thy tear.

Surely no blame can fall upon the nymph who rejected a ſwain of ſo little meaning.

His

His verſes are not rugged, but they have no ſweetneſs; they never glide in a ſtream of melody. Why Hammond or other writers have thought the quatrain of ten ſyllables elegiac, it is difficult to tell. The character of the Elegy is gentleneſs and tenuity; but this ſtanza has been pronounced by Dryden, whoſe knowledge of Engliſh metre was not inconſiderable, to be the moſt magnificent of all the meaſures which our language affords.

THE following Elegy was accidentally omitted:

TO MISS DASHWOOD.

In the Manner of OVID.

O ſay, thou dear poſſeſſor of my breaſt,
Where's now my boaſted liberty and reſt!
Where the gay moments which I once have known!
O, where that heart I fondly thought my own!
From place to place I ſolitary roam,
Abroad uneaſy, not content at home.
I ſcorn the beauties common eyes adore;
The more I view them, feel thy worth the more;
Unmov'd I hear them ſpeak, or ſee them fair,
And only think on thee, who art not there.
In vain would books their formal ſuccour lend,
Nor wit nor wiſdom can relieve their friend;

Wit

Wit can't deceive the pain I now endure,
And wiſdom ſhews the ill without the cure.
When from thy ſight I waſte the tedious day,
A thouſand ſchemes I form, and things to ſay;
But when thy preſence gives the time I ſeek,
My heart 's ſo full, I wiſh, but cannot ſpeak.

And could I ſpeak with eloquence and eaſe,
Till now not ſtudious of the art to pleaſe,
Could I, at woman who ſo oft exclaim,
Expoſe (nor bluſh) thy triumph and my ſhame,
Abjure thoſe maxims I ſo lately priz'd,
And court that ſex I fooliſhly deſpis'd,
Own thou haſt ſoften'd my obdurate mind,
And thus reveng'd the wrongs of womankind;
Loſt were my words, and fruitleſs all my pain,
In vain to tell thee, all I write in vain;
My humble ſighs ſhall only reach thy ears,
And all my eloquence ſhall be my tears.

And now (for more I never muſt pretend)
Hear me not as thy lover, but thy friend:

Thouſands will fain thy little heart enſnare,
For without danger none like thee are fair;
But wiſely chooſe who beſt deſerves thy flame,
So ſhall the choice itſelf become thy fame;
Nor yet deſpiſe, though void of winning art,
The plain and honeſt courtſhip of the heart:
The ſkilful tongue in love's perſuaſive lore,
Tho' leſs it feels, will pleaſe and flatter more,
And, meanly learned in that guilty trade,
Can long abuſe a fond, unthinking maid.
And ſince their lips, ſo knowing to deceive,
Thy unexperienc'd youth might ſoon believe;
And ſince their tears, in falſe ſubmiſſion dreſt,
Might thaw the icy coldneſs of thy breaſt;
O! ſhut thine eyes to ſuch deceitful woe:
Caught by the beauty of thy outward ſhow,
Like me they do not love, whate'er they ſeem,
Like me—with paſſion founded on eſteem.

4. AP 54

COLLINS.

WILLIAM COLLINS was born at Chicheſter on the twenty-fifth of December, about 1720. His father was a hatter of good reputation. He was in 1733, as Dr. Warton has kindly informed me, admitted ſcholar of Wincheſter College, where he was educated by Dr. Burton. His Engliſh exerciſes were better than his Latin.

He firſt courted the notice of the publick by ſome verſes to a *Lady weeping*, publiſhed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

In 1740, he ſtood firſt in the liſt of the ſcholars to be received in ſucceſſion at New College; but unhappily there was no vacancy. This was the original misfortune of his life. He became a Commoner of Queen's College, probably with a ſcanty maintenance; but was in about half a year elected a *Demy* of Magdalen College, where he continued till he had taken a Bachelor's degree, and then ſuddenly left the Univerſity; for what reaſon I know not that he told.

He now (about 1744) came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pocket. He deſigned many works; but his great fault was irreſolution,

lution, or the frequent calls of immediate neceſſity broke his ſchemes, and ſuffered him to purſue no ſettled purpoſe. A man, doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much diſpoſed to abſtracted meditation, or remote enquiries. He publiſhed propoſals for a Hiſtory of the Revival of Learning; and I have heard him ſpeak with great kindneſs of Leo the Tenth, and with keen reſentment of his taſteleſs ſucceſſor. But probably not a page of the Hiſtory was ever written. He planned ſeveral tragedies, but he only planned them. He wrote now-and-then odes and other poems, and did ſomething, however little.

About this time I fell into his company. His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge conſiderable, his views extenſive, his converſation elegant, and his diſpoſition chearful. By degrees I gained his confidence; and one day was admitted to him when he was immured by a bailiff, that was prowling in the ſtreet. On this occaſion recourſe was had to the bookſellers, who, on the credit of a tranſlation of Ariſtotle's Poeticks, which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to eſcape into the country. He ſhewed me the guineas ſafe in his hand. Soon afterwards his uncle, Mr. Martin, a lieutenant-colonel, left him about two thouſand

ſand pounds; a ſum which Collins could ſcarcely think exhauſtible, and which he did not live to exhauſt. The guineas were then repaid, and the tranſlation neglected.

But man is not born for happineſs. Collins, who, while he *ſtudied to live*, felt no evil but poverty, no ſooner *lived to ſtudy* than his life was aſſailed by more dreadful calamities, diſeaſe and inſanity.

Having formerly written his character, while perhaps it was yet more diſtinctly impreſſed upon my memory, I ſhall inſert it here.

"Mr. Collins was a man of extenſive literature, and of vigorous faculties. He was acquainted not only with the learned

tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spaniſh languages. He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction, and ſubjects of fancy; and by indulging ſome peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with thoſe flights of imagination which paſs the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a paſſive acquieſcence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monſters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of inchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repoſe by the water-falls of Elyſian gardens.

"This was however the character rather of his inclination than his genius; the grandeur of wildneſs, and the novel-

ty of extravagance, were always defired by him, but were not always attained. Yet as diligence is never wholly loſt; if his efforts ſometimes cauſed harſhneſs and obſcurity, they likewiſe produced in happier moments ſublimity and ſplendour. This idea which he had formed of excellence, led him to oriental fictions and allegorical imagery; and perhaps, while he was intent upon deſcription, he did not ſufficiently cultivate ſentiment. His poems are the productions of a mind not deficient in fire, nor unfurniſhed with knowledge either of books or life, but ſomewhat obſtructed in its progreſs by deviation in queſt of miſtaken beauties.

"His morals were pure, and his opinions pious: in a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of diſſipation, it cannot be expected that any character ſhould be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want by which the freedom of agency is almoſt deſtroyed; and long aſſociation with fortuitous companions will at laſt relax the ſtrictneſs of truth, and abate the fervour of ſincerity. That this man, wiſe and virtuous as he was, paſſed always unentangled through the ſnares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm; but it may be ſaid that at leaſt he preſerved the ſource of action unpolluted, that his principles were never ſhaken, that his diſtinctions of right and wrong were never confounded,

founded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure, or casual temptation.

"The latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with pity and sadness. He languished some years under that depression of mind which enchains the faculties without destroying them, and leaves reason the knowledge of right without the power of pursuing it. These clouds which he perceived gathering on his intellects, he endeavoured to disperse by travel, and passed into France; but found himself constrained to yield to his malady, and returned. He was for some time confined in a house of lunaticks, and afterwards retired to the care

of his ſiſter in Chicheſter, where death in 1756 came to his relief.

"After his return from France, the writer of this character paid him a viſit at Iſlington, where he was waiting for his ſiſter, whom he had directed to meet him: there was then nothing of diſorder diſcernible in his mind by any but himſelf; but he had withdrawn from ſtudy, and travelled with no other book than an Engliſh Teſtament, ſuch as children carry to the ſchool: when his friend took it into his hand, out of curioſity to ſee what companion a Man of Letters had choſen, *I have but one book*, ſays Collins, *but that is the beſt.*"

Such

Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converſe, and whom I yet remember with tenderneſs.

He was viſited at Chicheſter, in his laſt illneſs, by his learned friends Dr. Warton and his brother; to whom he ſpoke with diſapprobation of his Oriental Eclogues, as not ſufficiently expreſſive of Aſiatick manners, and called them his Iriſh Eclogues. He ſhewed them, at the ſame time, an ode inſcribed to Mr. John Hume, on the ſuperſtitions of the Highlands; which they thought ſuperior to his other works, but which no ſearch has yet found.

His diſorder was not alienation of mind, but general laxity and feebleneſs, a de-

a deficiency rather of his vital than intellectual powers. What he ſpoke wanted neither judgement nor ſpirit; but a few minutes exhauſted him, ſo that he was forced to reſt upon the couch, till a ſhort ceſſation reſtored his powers, and he was again able to talk with his former vigour.

The approaches of this dreadful malady he began to feel ſoon after his uncle's death; and, with the uſual weakneſs of men ſo diſeaſed, eagerly ſnatched that temporary relief with which the table and the bottle flatter and ſeduce. But his health continually declined, and he grew more and more burthenſome to himſelf.

To

To what I have formerly ſaid of his writings may be added, that his diction was often harſh, unſkilfully laboured, and injudiciouſly ſelected. He affected the obſolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, ſeeming to think, with ſome later candidates for fame, that not to write proſe is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of ſlow motion, clogged and impeded with cluſters of conſonants. As men are often eſteemed who cannot be loved, ſo the poetry of Collins may ſometimes extort praiſe when it gives little pleaſure.

Mr.

Mr. Collins's firſt production is added here from the *Poetical Calendar:*

TO MISS AURELIA C——R,

ON HER WEEPING AT HER SISTER'S WEDDING.

Ceaſe, fair Aurelia, ceaſe to mourn;
Lament not Hannah's happy ſtate;
You may be happy in your turn,
And ſeize the treaſure you regret.

With Love united Hymen ſtands,
And ſoftly whiſpers to your charms;
"Meet but your lover in my bands,
"You'll find your ſiſter in his arms."

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